DIN And SHARI'AT

Translation of:

"Din o Shari'at"

By:

Maulana Muhammad Manzur Numani (rahimahullah)

Zam Zam Publishers
Karachi-Pakstan

ZamZam Publishers

2, Shah Zeb Centre,
Gawali Line # 3
Near Muqaddas Masjid,
Urdu Bazaar, Karachi, Pakistan
Post Code 74200

Phone (021) 7760374, Fax: (021) 7725673
Email: zamzam01@cyber.net.pk
zamzam@sat.net.pk

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Foreword

Bismillâhi r'raħmâni r'raħîm

"O my Lord, grant me that I remain grateful for these favours of yours with which you have favoured me and my parents, and that I do good with which you become pleased, and count me among your virtuous servants."

[The prayer of the Prophet Sulaimân (Solomon) in *Sûrah Naħl*.]

The gifts and favours of Allâh Almighty on this sinful servant are beyond count, and of all these, the greatest gift and favour is that purely of His generosity, he created me in a Muslim house, and made me a born Muslim, and then gave my late father the *tawfîq* that, despite definite possibilities for and encouragement towards secular schooling, and through it, worldly status, and indeed, despite certain facilities for this being available, he decided, purely on the basis of his concern for *dîn*, that I should acquire religious learning, with the purpose of service of the *dîn*. Then Allâh Almighty, of his liberality, and through the *barkat* of my father's intention, gave me some share of knowledge of Religion. Then he gave me *tawfîq* to make some broken efforts to perform some service of the *dîn*.

man ân khâkam
keh abr naw bahârî
kunad az lutf
bar man qatrah bârî

agar bar ruwaid
az tan ṣad zabânam
chaw sawsan shukr luṭfash
kay tawânam

[This verse is in Persian. A fairly literal translation is:
I am that dust
on which a new spring cloud

out of (pure) kindness
dropped a raindrop.

Even if I had springing
from my body a hundred tongues
like an iris (has leaves),
to give thanks for His kindness
how would I be able?]

In this connection, one particular favour is that he has caused to be written through my pen a number of small or larger books that have become a pretext for reform in *dîn*. Through the generosity of Allâh Almighty, these books have been given this acceptance in this world that in religious circles they have generally been approved of and considered to be useful and beneficial. Furthermore, by the generosity of Him who is above all, they have become much more widely published than should be the case with books from an unpractised and unskilled writer like myself, and I hope and pray through the mercy and kindness of my gracious Lord, for their acceptance in the Hereafter.

'*Allâhumma*, do not let me be deprived from praying to you."

Out of all my books, when I see the effect and acceptance that Allâh Almighty has given *to "Islam kiyâ hè?"* (What is Islam?), this feeble individual has great hope of it becoming also, *in shâa allâh*, a means of his salvation and forgiveness in the Hereafter. The particular visible cause, in my view, of the acceptability and usefulness of *"Islâm kiyâ hè?"* was that, to a fair degree it covers the teachings of Islâm comprehensively, and its style of writing is straightforward and its vocabulary is easy. However, because it was written with ordinary simple and uneducated people in mind, no attempt was made to deal with the doubts of skeptics, or the specious arguments that are put forward by deviant sects.

A very short time after the publication of *"Islâm kiyâ hè?"* it came to mind that a similar comprehensive book, one level higher, was also

needed, in which the principles and teachings of Islâm were put forward in such a way that the heretical doubtings and specious arguments of the present times, and the fallacies and misrepresentations of the proponents of deviation and error should be cleared from people hearts, and through which, together with knowledge and awareness, peoples' minds should develop insight, and their hearts should develop conviction and trust in relation to *dîn* and *sharî'at*, and assurance on the path of the *ahl* e *sunnah* which the *salaf* e *şâliĥîn* elected to follow. This book you are now holding, in the opinion of this weak person, and Allâh knows better the reality, is the practical outcome of this hope. The history of its compilation and arrangement is worth mentioning.

At the beginning of 1372 *hijrî* (end of 1952) some of my religious friends in Lucknow arranged an eight day teaching and development program, and my responsibility in this was to give a one hour lecture each day on the subject of "Dîn and Sharî'at", and to try, in the course of these eight lectures, to cast sufficient light both in terms of principles, and where necessary, particulars, on all the branches of Dîn and Sharî'at for people to develop something of the insight and assurance that is particularly needed in our time. I composed the outlines of my lectures with this purpose in mind, and when the due date came, began my lectures. In six lectures, following my notes, I spoke on the subjects of *Îmâniyât* (points of faith), *'Ibâdât* (acts of worship), *akhlâq* (moral character), *mu'âsharat* (social relations), and *mu'âmalât*. (commercial dealings). However, by the will of Allâh Almighty, on the sixth day, in the middle of my lecture, I had an attack of fever, and as a result, the subjects on which I had wanted to speak on the seventh and eighth days were not covered.

"Allâh Almighty does what he wills, and ordains what he intends."

In this program, together with the giving the lectures, arrangements had been made for them to be written down. When the transcripts of the six lectures I had been able to give had been corrected and were given to me for checking, I saw that if they were slightly altered and arranged in the form of a complete book, and the missing subjects

which I had not been able to cover because of my becoming sick were set down in writing, the book for the benefit of the more intellectual and educated people of the present day, which I had felt was needed after the publication of *"Islâm kiyâ hè?"* would be ready for publication.

The transcripts of the six lectures which had come before me after correction were published in a special edition of the monthly magazine *"Al Furqân"* under the title of *"Dîn and Sharî'at."* However, as a result of other commitments, the work in this connection that still remained, continued to get delayed. Now, by the *tawfîq* of Allâh Almighty, this has also come to conclusion, and the outcome is the completed book that is now before you.

"And praise is for Allâh who is the one by whose power and glory any good work comes to completion."

I have also included the article compiled from my six lectures that was published under the heading of "Dîn and Sharî'at" in the special edition of Al Furqân in 1972. However, at various points several extra pages have been added and many adjustments made, and at the end something has been written on the subject of *"Khidmat and Nuşrat of Dîn"* (Service and Assistance of Religion), *"Siyâsat and Hukûmat"* (Politics and Government), and "Iħsân and Taşawwuf" (Consciousness of Allâh and the Sufî Path). This is all a separate addition, and comprises almost a third of the book.

This weak person also understands this book to be a special favour of Allâh Almighty, and has hopes that *in shâa allâh*, from studying it, readers will obtain both intellectual insight and assurance of the heart concerning *Dîn* and *Sharî'at*, and also eagerness and desire to practice on it, and all this will only come from Allâh Almighty.

"Everything
is from Allâh."

Some Important points

1 In this book, in some places a lecturing style will be noticed, and at others, one of composition and writing. However, after what has been said above about the way in which this book came to be written, there will be no further need for explanation or apologies. In the first part, that is to say in the sections on *Îmânīyat* and *'Ibâdât* , the lecturing style is in many places more evident. The effect of this has been that at these places, the flow of the discourse has not adhered very strictly to the subject. For example, in the explanation on Prophethood, together with reference to the *ijtihâd* of the Prophets *alaihim us salâm*, mention has also been made of the *ijtihâd* of the *mujtahid* Imâms. Similarly, in the discussion on miracles, *karâmat*, and then the *awliyâa* and their status and their rights have also been mentioned, and in the flow of speech, this kind of thing is both natural and in terms of principle, is also proper.

2 At the time of writing on the subject of "*Khidmat* and *Nuṣrat* of *Dīn* " (Service and Assistance of Religion), I did not have in mind any particular present-day association or assembly for the service of *dīn*. What I have done is try to put forward a compilation of the requirements and the principles and instructions of *dīn* concerning this field, and the encouragement stress on this that have come from Allâh Amighty and His Messenger.

3 Similarly, in the explanation on "Siyâsat and Ḥukûmat" (Politics and Government), I did not have the politics of any particular country or government in mind, but have described the guidelines and teachings in principle of Islâm relating to this field, and the difference in the orders and requirements of *dīn* resulting from differences in the conditions and capabilities of Muslims living in regions of Muslim or non-Muslim rule have only been demonstrated in principle. Engagement with the political issues of particular countries

(whose nature is not lasting, but transient) would also not have been appropriate in this book. The proper place for those issues and arguments is in articles and editorials in journals. However, by way of correction, one point relating particularly to the field of Politics and Government needed to be covered here. After this book was completed, on re-reading this explanation it was felt that in it one point had not come through with as much clarity and definition as was needed. This is that, because Islâm does not just call to faith and 'acts of worship, but is the flag-bearer of setting the whole organisation of human life onto the basis of godliness and proper balance between spiritual and material concerns, and without power of government, this work cannot be carried out in full, for this reason, government is also an important part of the system and program of *dîn*, and this is the *dîn* and *îmân* of Muslims. However, this is certainly does not mean that in those places where there is no Islâmic government, it is not legitimate for Muslims to live there, or that for this reason, it is necessary for all business activity to be kept away from having anything to do with the government. On the contrary, the decision on this in different circumstances will, in the light of *Dîn* and *Sharî'at*, be different. The conditions of non-Muslim governments can be such that there is legally no room for participation or assistance in them by Muslims, and they can also be such that the benefit of Islâm and of Muslims is positively in involvement and assistance in them. The essential thing is that whatever is done should be done in the light of *Dîn* and Sharî'at, and adhering to its established limits, and not seeking the world, but seeking God.

4 Whatever this weak person has written on "*Iḥsân* and *Taṣawwuf*" (Consciousness of God and the Sufi Path) are things that he has heard from his elders or found from their books. Otherwise, because of my laziness and shortcoming in practice, I am devoid of this treasure. However, I have seen people who do have this treasure, and Allâh Almighty

has also given me love for them. So what I lean on is the *ħadîth e nabawî:*

"A man will be with those he loves."

5 In the translation of verses of the Holy Qur'ân and of *ħadîth* I have not kept to word for word translation, or maintained the same grammatical construction, but for the ease of understanding of readers, have for the most part made a free translation and only kept expressing their meaning in view.

6 The passages that have been written on many pages in light pen and in a separate frame were written after writing the main text, and their purpose is elucidation of the preceding paragraph. Their purpose is essentially the same as the "*fâidahs*" written in the margins of old Persian and Urdû books. In any case, they are not part of the basic text. The text is continuous without them, and for this reason they have been enclosed in frames.

[In this translation they have been typed in smaller print and put in brackets.]

May Allâh Almighty give this book acceptance and usefulness in this world, and make it a means of forgiveness and mercy for me, and also include this book in the good works of all my religious mentors and benefactors.

"And for Him
that is not something difficult."

Muħammad Manzûr Nu'mânî
'afâ'llâhu 'anhu
Şafar 1378 (September 1958)

The Basis of *Dîn* and *Sharî'ah*

Aqîdah (Creed) and *'Aml* (Practice)

It must first of all be understood that the basis on which the Religion and Law of Islâm is founded is the teachings and instructions of the *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, that is to say the information and instructions from Almighty Allâh that he brought, and which are preserved in the Holy *Qur'ân* and in the *Hadîth*.

Thus it is these two things that form the basis of the Religion of Islâm. Then, some of this relates to what a person holds to be true, in other words, his *I'tiqâd*, and some of it relates to what a person does, that is to say his *a'mâl*.

That is to say, that one part of the guidance brought by the *Rasûl şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* informs us of certain realities which we would not be able to know of our own accord, and which we are instructed to accept and to believe on faith. This is the aspect relating to *Îmân* and *i'tiqâd*, and this part is of fundamental importance.

The second part relates to practical life, and in this instructions are given to do this, and not do that. This is the part of Islâm that relates to *A'mâl* (actions).

This in turn has several branches: *Ibâdât* (Acts of Worship), *Akhlâq* and *Ädâb* (Character and Conduct) ; *Mu'âmalât* (Monetary Dealings), *Mu'âsharat* (Social Life), *Da'wat* and *Nuşrat* (Missionary work and its assistance), *Siyâsat* and *Hukûma* (Politics and Government) and so on. Islâm comprises all these things, and all these are its branches.

In shâa Allâh, in the following pages we will explain something of the basic essentials of these things. First of all we would like to say a little about the first aspect, that is to say *Îmân* and *I'tiqâd*.

Îmân and *I'tiqâd*

Îmân

First of all understand that in the terminology of Religion and Law, the word *Îmân*, or Faith means believing in Allâh and in His Rasûl, being convinced that, for our guidance, Allâh Almighty has, through Revelation, told him a great many things that we could not come to know through our sight, or perception, or mental faculties, and therefore, on the basis of this conviction, accepting the things that have come to him from Allâh Almighty, and being convinced of their truth, and accepting the Religion he has come with as the True Religion.

Thus for a person to be a *Mu'min* or Believer it is necessary that he accept as Truth whatever the Messenger of Allâh has informed us of. If a person denies a single one of these things, then it is simply not possible that he is a *Mu'min*.

For example, suppose some person says that he believes that the Rasûl of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* is the Messenger of Allâh, and that he accepts everything he has said about the Oneness of Allâh, and about His Attributes. However, he then says that the things he has told us about the Day of Judgement, and about Heaven and Hell, (which we read in the Holy *Qur'ân* and in the *Ḥadîth*) do not make sense to him, and therefore he does not accept them.

It is then not possible that this person is a Believer.

In effect, *Îmân* means accepting *« kullu ma jâa bihi 'r rasûlu min 'indillâh »* i.e. believing and accepting whatever the Messenger brought from Allâh.

[For those persons who are alive during the lifetime of any Messenger of Allâh, it is a condition of Faith that they accept whatever teachings

and instructions from Allâh he puts before them. If they reject even one such thing, then they are not believers.

But when a Messenger no longer remains in the world, then it is only a condition of Faith to accept those things that are so firmly and definitely established as having come from that Messenger as to leave no room for any doubt.

In the terminology of Religion such teachings are called *ôurûriyât ud dîn* (essentials of religion).To accept all of these is a condition of *Îmân* or Faith. If a person denies any one of them then he is not a believer, and if he was originally a Muslim, then his relationship with Islâm is thereby terminated.]

'Aqâ'id and *Îmâniyât*

Some of the things in which we are required to believe and accept on faith relate to the person and attributes of Allâh, and some relate to other matters such as His Prophets or Messengers, the Angels, and Qiyâmat.

We will start with those aspects of Faith that relate to Almighty Allâh, as these are the ones that are intrinsically the most important.

* * *

The Existence of Allâh

The first thing in this connection is belief in the existence of Allâh – in other words to believe that whole Universe has a Creator, and that there is someone who controls what happens within it, and that this Person is Allâh.

It should be understood here that it is clear from history and from the religious literature of different peoples that belief in the existence of Allâh has always existed in the peoples of the Earth. That is to say, in every people and in every age, it has been accepted that this world has a Creator, and that He has great power.

Therefore the call and teachings of the Prophets who were sent to different peoples at different times, and who are referred to in the Holy *Qur'ân*, stresses the Oneness of Allâh. They do not appear to have felt so much need for stressing the actual existence of Allâh.

The same approach is also to be found in the Holy *Qur'ân* as a whole. It is filled with statements of the Oneness of Allâh and His Attributes, but not a great amount of stress is placed on arguments for His existence.

The reason for this is that for almost the whole of mankind His actual existence is an accepted fact, and if people's basic nature is not completely distorted, the existence of a Creator of the Universe is as natural and self-evident a fact as a person's own existence.

For this reason also, in our times, which some people have called the Age of Atheism, even in those Western countries which are the fountainhead of Atheism, the actual number of people who deny the existence of Allâh in relation to those who believe in Allâh amounts to no more than the salt in the flour. Even in Russia, which is understood to be the fountainhead of disdain and enmity towards

Allâh, those who disbelieve in the existence of Allâh are still in the minority.

In the *Qawmî Awâz*, Lucknow of 8 January 1953 there is an interview with the German church leader Pastor Niemoller in which he describes his experiences and observations on a visit to Russia:

« At present, about 65 percent of the population belong to some church. »

and:

« At present there are a 66 churches in Moscow itself, and in the Soviet Union as a whole there are some 20 000 church buildings standing, and from bishops down to ordinary monks, all the clergy expect this number to increase. »

This statement was made by Pastor Niemoller at a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. *(This was written in the 1950's)*

Anyway, in my own view, this is the reason why this question has not been treated as particularly worth discussing.

This is not to say that the Holy *Qur'ân* has just left this question, without putting forward any proofs. However, because it is something that is natural and self-evident, it has not been given as much emphasis as the question of *Tawhîd* or the Attributes of Allâh.

For people who think, some basic pointers and indications have been deemed sufficient. For example, in one place it comes :

« And Allâh splits open
the seed of grain,
and of the fruit tree ;
and brings the living
out of the dead

and the dead out of the living.
That is Allâh for you,
So to where
are you being turned? »

What is meant here is that a man can see from experience that if a grain of wheat, or the seed of some fruit is buried in the ground, then that seed splits from inside, and an extremely fine and delicate thread comes out from it, and this then splits the surface of the ground and emerges from it. Now, the point to think about is: Who is it who causes this grain or seed to split inside the earth, and who is it who causes this green living shoot to emerge from this dry lifeless seed?

Then, what power and what control is it that makes this delicate shoot, which is finer than a silk thread, thread its way through the earth and emerge from its surface?

So what is pointed out in this verse is that this is by the power of Allâh, and is all under His control and is all His doing.

Then it continues, that you see that from a lifeless thing like an egg, a squawking, pecking, flying bird emerges, and then some living things, instead of giving birth to living young, give birth to lifeless eggs, and then living young come out from these eggs.

The Holy *Qur'ân* puts forward these everyday observations, and points out that these things are manifestations of the creative power of Allâh, and that it is Allâh alone who causes them to happen. Those people who, despite seeing these manifestations of His power, still fail to recognise Allâh, have a blindfold over their eyes, and their minds have become paralysed.

Similarly in another place it comes :

« And in the Earth are signs
for those with conviction,

and in their own selves.
Can they not see? »

That is to say, if a person uses his eyes and also wants to see, then the Earth is filled with signs of Our existence and power, and even in a person's own self are signs.

If a person thinks a little, when he was in the womb of his mother, who was it who gave him his handsome and well-proportioned form ? Who made the eyes with which he sees? Who made the ears he hears with? Who made the tongue with which he tastes and the nose with which he smells? Who gave this tongue the power of speech? Who prepared a stream of milk for him in his mother's breasts? In whose hands is his life and his death?

If a person thinks carefully about his own self in this manner, then his own intelligence will give him the answer to all these questions – that all this is the work of a powerful and discerning invisible being.

And that is who Allâh is

And in another place the question is put in a striking manner:

"Is there then some doubt
about Allâh,
the Creator
of the Heavens and the Earth?"

That is to say, if anyone sees the Earth, and sees all the things that are in it, and the sees the sky above and all the stars and planets that are in it, what room can there be for doubt that the Heavens and the Earth have a Creator?

A proof for the existence of Allâh

On one occasion in the course of a discussion with a person who doubted the existence of Allâh, and was arguing the matter, I took

from my pocket a piece of paper, on which there was something written, and asked him, « If I say that the lines that are written on this paper have no writer, but they got written by themselves, then would you believe me, or accept the possibility of what I say being true? »

He said, « No. That is totally impossible.»

Then I said to him, « If I tell you that my watch was not made by anyone, but got made by itself, or my fountain pen was not made by anyone but just dropped ready-made out of the sky, or if I tell you that some motor-car got made by itself, and also does not have a driver, but just drives itself, and steers its own way through all intersections, would you believe me? »

He agreed that no one in his right mind could accept any of these things.

Then I said to him, « Look now. You cannot see how something like a motor car, or a fountain pen, or a watch, could get made by itself, and in no way can your intelligence accept that these crooked letters on this piece of paper could have got written by themselves.

But the Sun and the Moon, which move according to an extraordinary complex and ordered system, and even more extraordinary, man himself, with his heart and intellect, and his eyes and ears and tongue, how does your intelligence allow you to believe that these things just came into being of their own accord, without any maker? »

Then I said to him « Just as it is self-evident to you, and beyond any argument, that that these lines written on this paper have a writer, and that this watch and fountain pen have a manufacturer, and that this motor-car was made in some factory, and if it travels along the road, then certainly someone is driving it (be it directly or by remote control), so also, it is even more self-evident, and beyond any possibility of argument, that the Sun and the Moon, and Man and all the animals, and all this Universe, were created by some intelligent,

informed, and all-powerful being, and to doubt or to argue about this is proof of either a twisted and unnatural mind, or of complete lack of intelligence. »

Anyway it is my opinion, indeed my conviction that the question of the existence of Allâh is so natural and self-evident that there was very little reason to discuss it in the Holy *Qur'ân*.

Furthermore, to make some obvious point a topic for discussion, and then go into long and complicated argument about it, is contrary to the principles of good sense. All it can achieve is to make an easy question difficult and controversial.

In short, the existence of Allâh is not something about which there is any need to argue, and therefore this particular error has never been very widespread among mankind. Indeed, at times it would appear that if those people who argue against the existence of Allâh are put to the test, then in fact acceptance of His existence can still be found hidden away in some corner of their hearts.

* * *

Tawhîd
or
Recognising That God Alone is God.

However, the question of *Tawhîd* is one on which a great many peoples have gone astray. Therefore this has always been the main subject of the preaching and teachings of all the Prophets *alaihimus salâm*. Also, in the Holy *Qur'ân* and in the statements of the *Rasûl* of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, this question has been covered to the point where no doubt or confusion can remain.

Before trying to understand what has been said on this matter in the Holy *Qur'ân* and in the *Ḥadîth* of the Rasûl of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, it is necessary to understand one point. The person who falls into the error of *Shirk* is the one who does not have a proper understanding of the Attributes of Allâh. Anyone who does have a proper understanding of His Attributes will never fall into *Shirk*.

[*Shirk* – the i is pronounced like the i in *shin*, not like in *irk* or *kirk*.
Shirk means to ascribe partners to God, in other words to ascribe divinity, or the attributes of divinity, to any person or entity other than Allâh. A person who does this is called a *Mushrik*, plural *Mushrikûn*.

Shirkat is the Arabic word for partnership, the point being that God is Sole Creator and Sole Owner of the Universe, and not a member of some fictitious partnership or association of gods.] [Translator]

For example, if a person is convinced that it is Allâh who creates everything, that it is Allâh who looks after everything, that it is Allâh who give children, that it is Allâh who gives life and takes it away, that it is Allâh who gives health or sickness, in short that whatever happens in this world happens by the decision of Allâh alone, and through His doing, and is dependent on Him while He is independent of everything, then clearly, the person who is convinced of these

things will not ask his needs of anyone other than Allâh, nor will he worship or try to win the pleasure and favour of anyone other than Him

One way of making *Tawhîd* clear

Thus, one way of making *Tawhîd* clear and getting it into peoples hearts that has been chosen in the Holy *Qur`ân* and in the *Hadîth* of the Rasûl *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, is that of explaining in detail the Attributes of Allah Then a person can come to know that when He has all these Attributes, then only He is fit to be worshipped and obeyed.

This way of putting the matter can be seen right in the beginning of the Holy *Qur`ân* in *Sûrah Fâtiĥah* First a person is told to say:

"All praise
is for Allâh
the Lord and Master
of all worlds.
Whose mercy
Is all embracing
and without limit;
to Whom belongs the Day
on which all will be reckoned."

After this proclamation of the Attributes of Allâh, he is told to say:

"You are the one
we serve and obey,
and you are the one
we turn to for help"

In other words, when Allâh is the one who controls and looks after everything in existence, when He is the one who provides us with all our needs, when He is kind and merciful to the utmost degree, and when, together with these gentle qualities, He is the Holder of Power

who will give reward and punishment in the hereafter, then He is the one whom we will worship, and He is the one to whom we will turn for all our needs.

Another way of making *Tawhīd* clear

In other places first a declaration of *Tawhīd* is made and then the statement that Allāh alone is fit to be worshipped and served, and then this is followed by a statement of some of His Attributes. For example in *Âyat ul Kursī* , first it is stated :

« Allâh,
other than Whom
there is no god. »

Then His Attributes and His position are set out in this way :

« The Living
the Maintainer , »

That is to say, He is the one who is Living, and who gives life, and whose life is of itself and not dependent on anything. Every other living thing owes its life to him. He is the one who keeps all other things in existence and under control.

« He is not overtaken
by inattention or sleep »

He is at all times awake and aware; not for one single instant does it happen that some person turns to Him for some need and He is not conscious of it, or His attention is elsewhere. Sleep or inattention are simply not things that apply to him.

« All that is
in the Heavens or the Earth
is His »

He is the one who owns everything in existence and He is the one who makes the decisions.

« Who is there
who can intercede before Him,
except with His permission »

That is to say, nobody.

« He knows what is before them
and what is behind them,
'and they cannot grasp
a single thing
of what He knows,
except what He wishes »

« His throne extends
over all of the Heavens
and the Earth ;
and He does not become tired
from looking after them,
and He is the Supreme
and Almighty. »

As you will have noted, in this Âyat, first *Tawhîd* is put forward :

« Allâh.
Other than Whom
there is no god. »

then after this, that position and those attributes are described, that will lead a person to himself come to the conclusion that indeed no-one other than this Being can be God, and only He is a fit object of worship.

Similarly in *Sûrah Ikhlâs* first the Singularity of Allâh is stated.

« Say that Allâh is One. »

In other words first tell people that Allâh is One and Only, then tell them those of His attributes that will make them understand this themselves :

« Allâh is the Independent
on whom all things depend

He does not have offspring,
nor was He born of anyone»

And nobody whatsoever
is His equal. »

If a person understands the position and Attributes that are set out in these brief verses, then he will himself understand that without these attributes no one can be called God, or regarded as worthy of worship.

The only Being who can be called God is the One who is independent of all else, who is in a category all of His own, and who has no equal, nor anyone to whom He can be compared.

What is presented here is a principle, and from this, a way is opened for understanding generally the manner in which the explanations of *Tawhîd* in the Holy *Qur'ân* are put forward.

What is the least degree of *Tawhîd* that is acceptable, and what is the first requirement of *« lâ ilâha illallâh (there is no god except God) »* ?

There is also another point of principle concerning *Tawhîd*, which it is necessary to understand.

There is a level of *Tawhîd* i.e. recognising Allâh to be One, which many *Mushrikûn* also accept, but, according to what is said in the Holy *Qur`ân*, this is not enough.

For example, it is not enough just to accept that the Heavens and the Earth have one Creator, and that different parts were not created by different beings. It is clearly evident in one place after another in the Holy *Qur`ân* that the *Mushrik* Arabs also accepted this.

The Statement by the Holy *Qur`ân* that the *Mushrik* Arabs also accepted a degree of *Tawhîd.*

With slight variation in wording, it comes in a number of places in the Holy *Qur`ân* that, if you ask these *Mushrikûn* who created the Heavens and the Earth, they will say, « Allâh ».

« And if you ask them
who created
the Heavens and the Earth
and keeps the Sun and Moon
under control
they will certainly say, "Allâh." »
(Sûrah Ankabût r6)

Even more than this, they also accepted and believed that it is Allâh who controls the workings of the Universe, that He is the one who gives provision and that He is the one who gives life and death:

« Say, Who will give you provisions
from the Heavens and the Earth,
and who owns
your ears and eyes,
and who brings the living
out of the dead
and who brings the dead
out of the living
and who plans out

what is to happen?
They will say, "Allâh". »
(Sûrah Yûnus r4)

So this much *Tawhîd* the *Mushrik* Arabs also accepted.

What then was their *Shirk* ?

Then, the thing we have to think about is what was their *Shirk* ?

From the Holy *Qur'ân* itself it is evident that, despite recognising Allâh as the Creator, Owner, Planner, and Controller of the whole Universe, and also considering the entities they called gods and goddesses to be created by Allâh, they considered their relationship with Allâh to be so close, that if they wanted to give something to some person, they could give it, and if they wanted to take something away from someone they could take it away, and if they wanted to make someone rich they could make him rich, and if they wanted to take away someone's wealth and make him poor then they could do so. Similarly, if they wanted to make someone sick or healthy they could do so, if they wanted to give someone children they could do so.

In short these *Mushrikûn* considered that, because of their special relationship with Allâh, these gods and goddesses of theirs had been given specific powers, and freedom of decision in their exercise, and therefore, to gain their pleasure, they would worship them, and make vows to them, offer up sacrifices to them, make *tawâf* (walk in circles) around their statues, and ask their help in obtaining their needs and solving their difficulties.

The Holy *Qur'ân* has called this kind of thinking and this kind of behaviour *Shirk*, and this is the *Shirk* that is to be found in the *Mushrikûn* of most peoples and countries.

There are very few *Mushrikûn* in the world who hold that anyone other than Allâh had a share in creating and controlling the Universe. And

as far as my knowledge goes, no people has said that their gods are the equals of Allâh.

And, as we have said about the *Mushrik* Arabs, all this is clearly evident from the Holy *Qur`ân* and the *Hadîth*.

It is also said in a number of places in the Holy *Qur`ân* that when they are travelling in a ship on the sea, and storm waves start to build up and threaten them, then they forget their gods and goddesses, and call on Allâh alone, and put their hope in Him alone. Thus, in one place it comes:

« And when danger threatens you
on the seas,
you forget all those you call on
except for Him alone. »
(Sûrah Banî Isrâ`îl r7) .

« And when a wave
looms over them
like a cloud
they call on Allâh,
addressing their Religion
exclusively to Him. »
(Sûrah Luqmân r4)

So from both the words and the actions of the *Mushrik* Arabs it is clear that they did not regard their gods as being the equals of Allâh, but understood Allâh to be above and beyond all of them, and understood their gods to be created by Him and under his orders.

The *Talbîyah* of the Arab Mushrikîn

In the books of *Hadîth*, the *Talbîyah** that the Arab *Mushrikîn* called out in their *Mushrikânah* Hajj, is quoted.

"[*talbīyah*: the calling out of *labbaika* meaning "I am here at your call," during the *Hajj*.]

After the words

« O Allâh. I am here at your call. No-one is your partner. »

They had added the words:

« Except the partners who are yours, and who do not own anything »

<u>The nature of the *Shirk* of the *Mushrik* Arabs and its rejection in the Holy *Qur`ân*</u>

Thus the *Shirk* of the Arab *Mushrikûn* did not consist in regarding their gods as Creators of the world, or as the source of Providence, like Allâh, nor did they understand them to be in any way the equals of Allâh.

Their *Shirk* was that, despite believing in Allâh as the Creator, Owner, Planner, and Controller, they understood that because of close relationship with Allâh, these gods of theirs have some autonomous control over certain limited aspects of Creation, and that if they wish, they can help or harm us.

On this basis, to please them, they used to worship them, that is to say bow down in *sajdah* to them, make *tawâf* around their statues, make vows to them, offer sacrifices to them and ask them for favours and for the fulfilment of their needs.

This thinking and this behaviour was *Shirk*, and this is the kind of *Shirk* that is to be found in most peoples, and therefore this is the kind of *Shirk* that the Holy *Qur`ân* has most particularly and repeatedly rejected. In one place it comes:

« And they take gods before Him
who do not own anything

and who are themselves created,
and who do not have control
over even
their own harm or benefit
and who do not have power
over life or death
or resurrection. »
(Sûrah Furqân r1)

« Say to them: So, call on those
on whom you insist
in preference to Allâh.
They do not own
as much as a speck of dust
in either the Heavens or the Earth,
nor do they have
any share in them,
nor are any of them His helpers. »
(Sûrah Saba`a r3)

They do not own as much as a speck of dust, nor do they have any share with Allâh in the ownership of anything, and neither does Allâh take any help from them.

« Say to them: So, call on those
on whom you insist
in preference to Allâh.
And they do not have any power
to remove any harm from you
nor to prevent it. »
(Sûrah Banî Isrâ`îl r6)

In other words, all this is only your own imagining.

Then at the end of Sûrah Yûnus, it is stated, very specifically, and with great stress:

« Say: O People !
If you are in any doubt
about my Religion,
I do not
and will not worship
those you worship before Allâh,
but I worship
and will continue to worship
that Allâh
who causes you to die,
and I have been ordered
to be one of those
who are Faithful to Him.
And (I have been ordered):
Turn your face towards Religion,
turning away from all else,
and do not ever become
one of the Mushrikûn.
And do not,
In place of Allâh,
call on someone
who cannot help you
and cannot hurt you.
And if you did that
then you would become
one of the oppressors.
And if Allâh afflicts you
with some harm,
then no-one can remove it
except Him.
And if He wills
some good for you,
then no-one can prevent
his generosity.
He grants it
to whoever he decides
of His servants.

And He is the Forgiving
and Merciful. »

(Sûrah Yûnus r11)

So in these verses, and in hundreds of other verses, the *Shirk* of the *Mushrik* Arabs that is refuted is their belief concerning certain beings that, even though they are creatures of Allâh and under His power, their relationship with Him, and their involvement in His control of things, puts them in a position where they can remove our difficulties, and give things like honour, wealth, and children.

So on the basis of this belief they would ask their needs of them, pray to them and perform acts of worship to please them. In other words, in the same way as a person, to please Allâh, and to acknowledge his own helplessness, performs acts of worship, so they would worship their gods.

The Holy *Qur'ân* calls these beliefs *Shirk*, and also these acts of worship and this turning to them for help, and in it they are called to understand that no one other than Allâh has harm or benefit in his hand, or is able to dispense these things by his own decision, and are told not to include anyone together with Him in worship or in asking for help.

Who Were the Gods of These *Mushrikîn* ?

At this point it should be understood who these gods were, about whom the *Mushrikûn* had these beliefs, and whom they regarded as able to fulfil their needs and remove their difficulties, and whom they therefore worshipped.

A great many people think that these things had to do with stone statues. But these stone statues were not their actual gods. The relationship of the *Mushrikûn* was with the Saints, and Souls, and Spirits, that these statues represented.

In the Holy *Qur'ân*, in *Sûrah Nûh*, the names of some of the gods of the people of *Nûh* are given: *Wadd*, *Suwâ'*, *Yaghûth*, *Ya'ûq*, and *Nasr*.

There are narrations about them to the effect that these were the names of some saintly elders who were truly Saints and Friends of Allâh. When they passed away, then after some time some of their followers, as a memorial to them, made statues of them, and paid respect to these statues. Then by degrees, the Shaytân led later generations to start worshipping them.

Similarly, the idols which the Arab *Mushrikûn* worshipped, they also understood to be memorials to some Spirits or Souls, and it was these beings they worshipped, and whom they understood to have the power to fulfil their needs and remove their difficulties, just as for example the Hindus worship idols of *Krishnajī* or *Râmchandarjī*.

The object of their worship is not the statue itself, but the person of *Krishnajī* or *Râmchandarjī*, and the statue is made as a means of focusing attention and as a medium of worship, and on this basis, it is shown respect.

Similarly, a great many ignorant so-called Muslims offer sacrifices to *ta'zīyahs*, bow before them, and greet them, and I hear that they even hang written requests onto them, and in general, treat them in precisely the same way that idol-worshippers treat their idols.

But these *ta'zia*-makers and *ta'zia*-worshippers do not consider these paper and bamboo constructions to be some unseen Power, but they do all this in the name of Imâm Husain, and regard the *ta'zia* as a symbol and a memorial to him, and this is exactly the same logic as that of idol-worship.

It also appears that there are some completely unintelligent villagers who actually do understand these paper and bamboo constructions to be the essential element of these things.

So similarly, among the Arab *Mushrikûn*, there would also have been some people who were so unintelligent that they actually understood the idols they had carved with their hands to themselves have, in some mysterious way, the power to fulfil their needs and remove their difficulties; and therefore they would have worshipped the actual statues.

Thus it come in the Holy *Qur`ân* :

« Do you worship
what you yourselves
have carved ? »

Ayats like this then refer to those of the Arab *Mushrikûn* who were so stupid that they thought that some power rested in the idols themselves.

And as for those who were not so unintelligent, but understood some real or imaginary saint or spirit to have control over benefit and harm, and to be able to fulfil their needs, and in fact worshipped them, and understood these idols to represent them, or to be a place where they manifested themselves, they are referred to in other verses, such as :

« And those you worship
in place of Allâh
are servants like yourselves. »

In another place, in *Sûrah Banî Isrâ`îl*, it is stated that they are themselves dependent on Me, they themselves fear Me, they themselves ask their needs of Me, look to approach Me and make strenuous efforts to do so, and hope for My mercy, and fear My punishment. The words of the Äyat are :

"They themselves are people
who pray,
looking for a way
to come closer to Him,

looking to see
who among themselves
is closest to Him,
and hope for His mercy
and fear His punishment."

(Surah Banî Isrâ`îl r6)

In *Äyats* like this, the *Shirk* that is referred to is that of those *Mushrikûn* who do not regard idols themselves as objects of worship, and as able to fulfil needs, but have this view of some spiritual entity who they understand to be close to Allâh. They then understand these idols to be representations, or reminders, or places of manifestation of them.

And sad to say, this is the condition of so many ignorant, supposedly Muslim, *Ta'zîyah*-worshippers and grave-worshippers. They have these kinds of beliefs about departed Saints, and on this basis bow before their graves and *ta'zîyahs*, and make vows to them.

Why, is it that, despite believing in Allâh as being Supreme, and being the Real Creator and Owner of All Things, these *Mushrikîn* turn to others to fulfil their needs?

In connection with *Shirk* and *Mushriks* there is another point that it is necessary to understand.

Many people will ask, and indeed they should ask, that when these *Mushrik* people understand that the actual Creator and Owner of All Things, and the actual Controller of the Universe, is the One Allâh, and when they understand the gods and goddesses they turn to for help to themselves be His creatures, and to be under His power, and that if they have any power, it is only partial, and full power is something that only Allâh has, and that Allâh is present, and everything can be asked of Him directly, then why is it then that, despite this, they ask for their needs from these gods and goddesses, and why in place of Allâh, do they worship them ?

This question arises with respect to the ancient Arab *Mushriks*, and also the *Mushriks* of our own time, such as Hindu Idol-Worshippers, and even supposedly Muslim *Ta'zîyah*-Worshippers and Grave-Worshippers.

We have thought a lot about this question, and in the end, the conclusion we have come to is that all these *Mushriks* thought, or think, that to please Allâh, and to ask their needs of Him is very difficult, because Allâh is only going to be happy when His Religious Laws are adhered to, and when people do not tell lies, and when they stay away from forbidden and indecent activities and live a decent life.

This is very difficult for these *Mushrik* people, and seems to them like a lifetime of hard labour. Therefore they give up hope of pleasing Allâh and getting what they need from Him.

Along with this, they also think that the real or imaginary beings they understand to be able to fulfil their needs, and to have power to harm or help them, will be made happy with a few pennies worth of sugar cakes as an offering, or by prostrating before them, or by hanging a cheap garland of flowers, or lighting a lamp, and, in this way, all their problems will be taken care of.

To my mind, the root of all *Shirk* is this deception on the part of the *Shaytân*.

The approach of the *Qur'ân* to taking people out from this *Shaytânî* delusion.

The way to get people out from this *Shaytânî* delusion is to make it clear to them that no-one other than Allâh has any say over anything, be it birth, welfare, life, death, health, sickness, wealth, poverty, honour, disgrace, or any other thing.

All these things are entirely in the control of Allâh, and He is the only one who can give anyone anything, and everything that exists is dependent upon him, as is said here:

« Say, O Allâh,
Owner of all Ownership,
You give ownership
to whoever you please,
and take it away
from whoever you please,
and give honour to
whoever you will,
and you abase
whoever you will.
All good is in your hand,
and you have power
over all things.

You put the night into the day,
and you put the day into the night,
and you take out
the living from the dead,
and you take out
the dead from the living,
and you provide
for whoever you will
without any reckoning. »
(*Surah Äli Imrân* r3)

and in another place :

« In His hand
is the control of all things. »
(*Sûrah Yâ Sîn* r5)
and :

« He has the keys
to the Heavens and the Earth. »
(*Sûrah Shûrâ* r2)

and in another place :

« Whatever Mercy
Allâh opens on Mankind,
there is no-one
who can hold it back ;
and whatever he holds back
there is no-one after him
who can send it. »
(*Sûrah Fâṭir* r1)

In the Holy *Qur`ân* the main approach adopted to saving *Mushriks* from *Shirk* is this one of making it clear to them that the *Shaytân* has given you this false idea that there is some power in some other person's hands as well, and there are others besides Allâh who have your benefit and harm within their control.

This is a complete lie from the *Shaytân*. Your benefit and harm, and all your needs, are entirely under the control of Allâh alone.

Therefore, understand that Allâh is the person to turn to in need, so ask from Him and worship only Him.

<u>Two important questions concerning *Tawhîd* and *Shirk*</u>

At this point there are two further points that need to be understood.

One is, what is *Ibâdat* or worship? That is to say what is *ibâdat*, in the sense that *ibâdat* directed towards someone other then Allâh is *Shirk*?

The other is that in this world of causes and effects, we take benefit from, and make use of, a great many things. For example we quench our thirst with water, we get heat and light from fire and from the Sun, we treat sickness with medicines, on many occasions we take help from other people like ourselves, such as *ḥakîms* and doctors in treating disease, or lawyers in conducting lawsuits.

Similarly, we get help in our work from servants and employees, and many poor people turn to the rich for help and assistance.

What then is the position with these things, and why are they not *Shirk*?

Here there is a further point that needs to be understood.

Why is it not *Shirk* to take help from material means ?

The basic point here is that in this world of causes and effects, whatever effects Allâh Almighty has put in any thing, such as the effect in water of quenching thirst, or the effect in the Sun of giving light and warmth, or the effect in medicine of healing sickness, everyone knows that these effects are not under the control of these things themselves.

Allâh Almighty has put them under control for our benefit. Therefore in making use of them there is no question of *Shirk*. Their position is like that of our servants, and making use of them is like taking work from our servants or from our horses or donkeys.

Similarly, with regard to those people to whom Allâh has given some talent with which they are able to be of benefit to others, such as a *ħakîm*, a doctor, or a lawyer, everyone knows that they do not have some mysterious unseen power, and nothing they have is actually in their own power.

They are also dependent on Allâh like ourselves. All that they have is that Allâh has, in this world of causes and effects, made them capable of being of use to us in a certain field.

Therefore, in taking work from them, or getting help from them, there is also no question of *Shirk*.

Shirk arises when some entity is regarded as a power in his own right, separate from these visible chains of cause and effect that Allâh has established, and then on the basis of this belief, people ask their needs from him and perform acts of worship to please him.

What is *Ibâdat* or Worship ?

The second question is what is *Ibâdat*? *Ibâdat* is a term that has a specific meaning in *Dīn* and *Sharīah*.

Understanding some person or entity to have Unseen control over benefit and harm, and to be able to fulfil people's needs, to then perform acts of humility and reverence such as *sajdah*, *tawaf*, making vows, offering sacrifices, and holding services in his name, for the purpose of pleasing and drawing close to that person or entity is, in the terminology of *Dīn* and *Sharī'ah*, called *Ibâdat*.

To this *Ibâdat* only Allâh has the right, and whoever behaves in this manner towards anyone other than Him is without question a *Mushrik*.

As has been pointed out earlier, the *Shirk* of most peoples consisted in this. They regarded someone other than Allâh as having control over benefit and harm, and to gain their pleasure would perform acts of worship, and this *Shirk* is the *dhulmun 'adhīm* (immense wrong) that will absolutely not be forgiven.

[It should be understood that in Arabic the word *ibâdat* also has an ordinary meaning of obedience. There is a clear and easily understood difference between these two meanings. In its specialised sense, *ibâdat* of anyone other than Allâh is not permissible and is straight *Shirk*, and is Major *Shirk*.

However, obedience to a created being is permissible, and in some cases, is actually ordered by Allâh, for example obedience to the *Rasûl*, obedience to the person in charge of something, or obedience by a child to his parents, or attentiveness and obedience of a wife towards her husband.

Those people who fail to distinguish between these two senses of the word, and confuse the two things together, make a very serious mistake in the explanation of *Dīn*. By doing this, the whole meaning of *Tawhīd* and *Shirk* is changed.

In shâa Allâh, in the chapter on *Ibâdat* more will be said on the meaning of *Ibâdat*.]

Some lesser degrees of *Shirk*

So far, the *Shirk* that we have discussed is the Major or real *Shirk* for which the Holy *Qur'ân* has announced categorically there will be no forgiveness. In other words, for those who leave or have left this world in this condition, there is no forgiveness and they will remain permanently in Hell, in the same way as those who left the world rejecting the *Rasûl* of Allâh.

However, in Shari'ah there are some things that are also called *Shirk*, but which do not involve this degree of real *Shirk*. But they are related to it or resemble it, or there is a danger of real *Shirk* developing from them.

For example, in some *Hadîth* taking oath by something other than Allâh is called *Shirk*.

So also is using charms to ward off spells, or doing things to show off or to impress people.

Here actual *Shirk* is not meant. This is a lesser degree of *Shirk*, and this is therefore, in the terminology of Shari'ah, called « *Shirkun dûna shirkin* » (*Shirk* other than *Shirk*) meaning that there is a *Shirk* that is less than *Shirk* itself.

Some of those *Ahlullâh*, whose *Tawhîd* is total, call love of the world and of the things in it, *Shirk*. To them, love of wealth is *Shirk*, love for prestige is *Shirk*, and the kind of love for wife and children that in any way interferes in a person's relationship with Allâh, and leads him to forgetfulness, is also *Shirk*.

But this does not mean that they are saying that this is the same kind of *Shirk* as idol-worship. What they mean is that these things are against the real spirit of *Tawhîd*.

New Idols of a New Age

In connection with *Tawhīd* and *Shirk* there is another point that is worth mentioning.

In this present age of ours, the influence of Europe has to a very great extent made people disgusted with the *Shirk* of previous ages, as its basis was nothing more than superstition and ignorance.

Now every educated man who has the slightest intelligence, and from his reading and writing has learned to think even a little, understands the worship of idols, stars, trees, rivers, animals and so on, to be the utmost foolishness and stupidity.

Even if, as a matter of formality and adherence to the culture of his people, he takes part in these things, his heart will certainly have already rejected them.

But the influence of this same Europe has, in place of the old despised idols, carved and presented to the world a set of new idols, and today it is these idols that are worshipped.

Among these idols are :

« The People »
« The Fatherland »
« The Progress of the Nation »
« The National Interest »
The Demands of the Stomach
[as in: "Well, you have to fill your stomach somehow, don't you."]
Wealth
Power

and many others.

To wish one's people or country well, and to have love for them is certainly not something wrong, and up to a point, it is also obligatory.

In the same way, regard for the interests of one's people or country, concern for one's livelihood, desire to have some comfort and respect in the world, as long as the distinction between Halâl and Harâm, and respect for other people's rights are maintained, are certainly not something bad.

Similarly, for the achievement of some good purpose like establishing justice, or looking after the creation of Allâh, to plan and make efforts to get political power is certainly not wrong, and the Anbiyâa (Prophets) *alaihimus salâm* have never prohibited these things, but on the contrary, have given orders concerning the way in which these things should be done.

But in our times, these things have been taken far beyond their limits, and have taken on a quasi-religious and god-like position.

Now it has become an accepted principle and tenet that, for the sake of The National Interest, or the The Progress of the Nation, or The Prosperity of the People, or The Country, everything becomes permissible.

In the same way, the earning of livelihood, and the pursuit of wealth and power, are regarded as not being subject to any laws of Allâh. In effect Livelihood has become an idol, to be served in any way a person pleases.

Similarly Wealth and Power have become gods on whose altars all Religion and Morality are to be sacrificed. Today a large number of people have made these things effectively their gods, and this is the current the world is following.

This Flag-worship, Nation-worship, Livelihood-worship, Wealth and Power-worship are the new *Shirk* of this age, and in the *Tawhīd* of Islâm there is no room for any of these things.

To all these new and ancient idols we should be saying what the *Imâm* of *Tawhîd*, *Nabî Ibrâhîm* (the Prophet Abraham) *alaihis salâm* said :

« We have nothing to do with you
and the things you worship
in place of Allâh. »
(*Sûrah Mumtahinah*, r1)

The root of all these forms of false religion is *nafs parastî* -worship of one's own desires- that is to say, doing whatever one feels like or is pleased with instead of being bound by and following the orders af Allâh. This is the root of every form of *Shirk*, and of every sin and evil.

In this sense, the worst of all idols is then a person's own self.

We have also seen that some of the saintly elders of our time, when explaining the meaning of the *kalimah* (declaration) *lâ ilâha illa`llâh* (No god except Allâh) generally put particular emphasis on this point. In their view, what *Tawhîd* particularly requires of us is that we should not just do what we feel like, but, in every affair, we should do as Allâh Almighty has ordered.

In one place in the Holy *Qur`ân* the desires of the Self are also referred to as a « god » :

« Have you seen the one
who takes as his god
his own desires. »
(Sûrah Furqân r4)

From this it is clear that the person who disregards the commands of Allâh, and goes according to his own desires, is in effect worshipping his own self, and his self has become his god.

In one report, the Rasûl of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* is quoted as saying :

« Your worst enemy is this self of yours, between your two sides. » *(Ihyâa ul 'Ulūm)*

Thus in saying *lâ ilâha illa'llâh* we should reject all those things which bear even some resemblance to a god or idol, and save ourselves from every degree of *Shirk*, and cultivate in ourselves abhorrence for such things, and try to make our *Tawhîd* pure and complete in every respect.

Just as *Shirk* is absolutely obnoxious in the sight of Allâh, so also *Tawhîd* is what pleases him more than anything else, and is the very spirit and life of Religion.

Finality of the Prophethoood and Thoroughness in *Tawhid*

One point that is also worthy of mention, is that because the chain of Prophethood finishes with the *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* and now no new Prophet is ever going to come, Almighty Allâh, through him, has set out *Tawhîd* so comprehensively that after this, no room is left for anything even resembling *Shirk*, and all those roads by which the Shaytân leads people to *Shirk* have been closed.

The greatest danger was that, in the same way that some of the followers of *Nabî Iysâ* (Jesus) *alaihis salâm* went astray, and elevated him to the position of a God and the Son of God, this Ummah might also be led astray by the Shaytân, and invent some *Mushrikânah* doctrines about the *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu 'ala*[illegible] *wa sallam*.

To close this door he has said in clear words

« Do not go beyond limits in praising me like the *Nasârâ* went over the limit with praise for Iysâ ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary). I am a servant, so say : His servant and His Messenger. » (Bukhârî and Muslim)

Some previous Ummahs made the graves of their Prophets a place for bowing down in worship and making *sajdah*. Referring to them, the Rasûl *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* has told his followers :

« The people before you made the graves of their prophets into a place of *sajdah*, so do not you make graves into a place of *sajdah*. I specifically prohibit you from this. » (*Muslim*)

And in his last illness he prayed to Allâh :

« O Allâh do not let my grave become an idol after I die. »
(*Mu'attâ Imâm Mâlik*)

It comes in one report that some *Sahâbîs* saw that in a certain country the people used to make *sajdah* to their elders, and they asked the Rasûl of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* for permission to make *sajdah* to him, and, as they did not have any misunderstanding about making *sajdah* to graves, and understood that the *Tawhîd* of Islâm left no room for any such action, they at the same time added that they would not make *sajdah* to his grave.

The Rasûl of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* then said to them, "Then do not do so now." (Abû Dâ'ûd)

When another *Sahâbî* (Salmân Fârsî) *raðhiyallâhu anhu* expressed a desire to make *sajdah* to the *Rasûl şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, he gave him a similar answer and said finally "So, do not make *sajdah* to me, but make *sajdah* to the One who is Living and does not die." (*Daylamî* and *Kanz ul A'mâl*)

Then, never mind *sajdah*, it is clear from *Hadîth* that the *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* prohibited the Sahâbah *raðhiyallâhu anhum* even from standing up in honour of him.

Basically, the reason for all these orders and precautions is that no scope or opportunity should remain for *Shirk* to develop.

The extent to which the *Rasûl şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* would make sure to close any possible avenues of *Shirk* is clear from the following event.

When his baby son Ibrâhîm *alaihi wa alà abîhis salâtu was salâm* passed away, it happened that, on that same day, there was an eclipse of the Sun. The *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* was afraid lest people should revert to old ignorant notions, and think that it was because of the mourning in his house that the Sun had been eclipsed. Therefore he had an announcement made that all the Muslims were to go to the Masjid immediately. After performing a *Salât* specifically for the occasion of an eclipse of the Sun, he gave a sermon in which, after praising Allâh, he said:

"The Sun and the Moon are two of the signs of Allâh, and do not go into eclipse for any person's death or life."

This he basically said for the protection of the *'eqîdah* of *Tawhîd*. The *Rasûl şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* was not ready to tolerate the possibility that anyone might think that the Sun could be eclipsed because of the mourning in his house. Similarly, in the orders of the *Sharî'ah* as a whole, the utmost care is taken to preserve *Tawhîd*, and close off the avenues of *Shirk*.

For example, at the times of the rising and setting of the Sun, and at actual noon, it is prohibited to perform *Şalât*, so that there should not be any even apparent resemblance to Sun-worship, and no possibility of anyone falling into misunderstanding on this point.

Consider also this example. In every *Salât* there is both *ruk 'û* and *sajdah*, and without them the *Salât* is in effect not made. But in *Janâzah* (Funeral) *Salât*, *ruk'û* and *sajdah* have been removed, so that no person watching should think that the people are bowing or making *sajdah* to the deceased.

But Allâh is witness that the Shaytân has been so successful in his efforts that in the so-called followers of this very Religion in which the

avenues of *Shirk* have been so carefully closed off, every kind of *Shirk* through which previous *Ummats* became *Mushrik*, are to be found today.

* * *

Al hamdu lillāh, *Shirk* and *Tawhīd* have been covered here at some length, as I have tried not to leave out anything on this matter that is essential.

Belief in the Âkhirat or Hereafter

One of the truths in which it is necessary for any Muslim to believe is the *Âkhirat*. That is to say, a person who does not believe in this cannot be termed a Muslim. In a great many places in the Holy Qur'ân, together with the phrase "faith in Allâh" comes the phase "and in the Last Day". For example:

"Whoever has faith in Allâh and in the Last Day"
or
"They have faith in Allâh and the Last Day."

What does having faith In the Last Day mean?

Faith in the Âkhirat means accepting the reality of what the *Anbiyâa* (Prophets) *alaihis salâm* have said concerning what happens after this life – namely, that there is another life and another world to come, and that there a person will be rewarded or punished for whatever he has done in this world. This is a summary of this *'aqîdah*. The detail of it is set out in the Holy Qur'ân and in the *Hadîth*.

In terms of reason, The Âkhirat is necessary

Concerning the *Âkhirat*, this much is evident to any person that after this life of ours there should be some other life in which people would be rewarded or punished for their actions, because we see here that a great many people do great evil for the whole of their lives - rob and terrorise people, suck the blood of the poor, live off bribery and corruption, oppress the weak, usurp people's rights, but nonetheless, for the whole of their lives, they continue to enjoy a life of luxury, and die in this condition.

Similarly, many people can be seen who live a very good life, do not wrong anyone, do not defraud or deceive anyone, do not usurp anyone's rights, and also serve and worship Allah, and work for the welfare of His creatures.

However, despite this, they pass the whole of their lives in poverty and difficulty, afflicted at intervals with sickness, difficulties, and distress, and in this condition pass away from this world.

So, when this world has been created by Allâh, and he sees all our actions, good and bad, and we see with our own eyes that here in this world neither do the good get proper repayment or reward for the good they do, nor do evildoers and sinners get punished for the evil they do, then it inevitably comes to mind that there should be some other life in which people will get from Allâh the reward or the punishment for their actions.

It is not possible that Allâh should be so unfair that the good that good people do should have no value in His sight, or that evildoers should not have to answer for the evil that they do, or that good and honest people and thieves and bandits should all, without distinction, receive the same treatment.

Allâh is exalted and noble. It is against the honour of even an ordinary decent man that he should treat good people and evil-doers, or oppressors and oppressed in the same way.

It comes in the Holy Qur'ân:

"So should we treat the obedient
in the same way
as the disobedient?"
(Sûrah Qalam r.2)

In short, the fact that in this life there is no reward and punishment for good and evil actions, is itself enough for a person to understand that

there then should be some future life in which people will be rewarded or punished for their actions.

This same thing can be put in another way.

We observe that everything in this world has its own properties and effects - for example, it is a property of fire that it burns, it is a property of water that it extinguishes fire and cleans. Similarly, every herb and plant has its properties.

In the same way, a person's physical actions have properties, and have effects that necessarily result.

For example, when he eats his hunger ceases and he feels satisfied. When he drinks water his thirst is quenched. If he eats something harmful, then he feels pain in his stomach. If he eats too much he gets indigestion. If a man eats poison, then he dies. If he takes medicine, his illness gets cured. If he takes some tonic, then he feels fitter and stronger. It is also clear that a man's moral actions, be they good or bad, are more important and higher than his physical actions. It is then not possible that his moral actions should have no effects, no outcome, or no properties at all.

For example, some person, instead of eating his food himself, gives it to some hungry person to eat, and himself stays hungry, or gives his water to someone else and himself remains thirsty, or purely for the sake of Allâh looks after the needs of some sick person who does not have anyone to look after him, or takes care of the needs of the poor, the orphan, and the sick, and spends on them the money he has himself earned. Together with this, he worships Allâh and is obedient to Him.

Now, human intelligence and nature will clearly require and conclude that these good actions should also result in some visible effect and outcome, and that this should be much more important and at a higher level than the effect and outcome of his physical actions.

Similarly, if some person oppresses people, persecutes the disadvantaged and the weak, abuses his trusts, deceives people in his dealings, takes bribes or robs people, engages in banditry, is heartless and cruel, sheds the blood of innocent servants of Allâh, never thinks of Allâh even by mistake, in short, is a Fir'awn or Nimrûd of his time, then our intelligence tells us that the outcome of these evil actions of his should be extremely severe, and should one day confront him.

Ultimately, when a man has to face the consequences of even the smallest physical wrong action he makes, then how will he not have the face the consequences of his moral wrongdoings?

Barley grows from barley,
and wheat grows from wheat.
So take care what you sow,
for so shall you reap.

Referring to this, it comes in the Holy Qur`ân:

"Do those
who commit every wrong
reckon that we will treat them
in life and in death
in the same way as those
who are faithful
and do what is good?
That is truly bad judgement."

Anyway, when we see right before our eyes that the effects and consequences of a person's physical actions are made manifest here in this world, but no effect or outcome of his moral and spiritual actions is apparent here, then our intelligence, natural instinct, and common sense, all require that after this life here there should be some other life where the good or evil consequences of these moral or spiritual actions should be made manifest, and where people should get the reward or punishment for their good or bad actions.

Why is reward and punishment not given in this world?

The wisdom behind this is that if the reward or punishment for every good or evil action was given in this world, then this life would not be a test, whereas in fact Allâh Almighty has made this life to be a test, and has then put reward and punishment, that is to say *thawâb* and *'adhâb* behind the veil of invisibility, and announced through His *Anbiyâ 'alaihimus salâm* that whoever is obedient here to His laws, and leads a good life, He will give him this and this reward in the next life – and whoever is rebellious, and leads a life of disobedience and wrongdoing, He will give him this and this punishment.

So, if we suppose that the reward or punishment for every action were to be given straightaway in this world, then this test would not be possible. In this case, everyone would simply avoid evil in the same way that everyone avoids jumping into fires, and everyone would have to do good in the same way that everyone has to eat and drink, and reward and punishment would simply cease to have any meaning.

Apart from this, another reason for putting reward and punishment in a different world is that in this world to give anyone the gifts and rewards that Allâh Almighty intends to give to His obedient servants, and the life of ease and comfort that He intends to grant them, is simply not possible.

Similarly, in this world it is not possible for anyone to endure the severe suffering and punishment that He intends to give to those who refuse to be obedient to Him - that is to say, it is so severe that if it were to happen in this world, then all peace and rest here would come to an end, and the whole world would burn out.

This world is perishable and limited in its resources, and then it is set up in a way that ease and difficulty are mixed up with each other, and the peace and tranquillity which Allâh Almighty intends to give to His obedient servants in return for the moral and spiritual good they have done is only possible in a place where there is no shadow of any trouble, and where there is nothing except happiness.

In the same way, the severe punishment and painful torments that He intends to inflict, in return for their moral and spiritual evils, on those who refuse to be obedient to Him is only possible in a world where there is nothing except pain and difficulty.

In any case, it is the decision of Allâh Almighty that he will give the reward or punishment for His servants' good or bad actions after this life, in another life and in another world.

This world is the world of the *Akhirat* (Hereafter), and it has two parts.

One is *Jannat* (Paradise) and the other is *Jahannam* (Hell). In *Jannat* the special *Karam* (kindness) and *Faḍl* (liberality) of Allâh will be made manifest, and in *Jahannam* only His *Qahr* (subjugating power) and *Ghaḍab* (anger) will be made manifest, and both of these will be manifested to the fullest degree, and it is there that His Divine Glory will be fully manifested.

The *Âkhirat* is also needed for the Glory of Allâh Almighty and His *Jalâl* and His *Jamâl* to be made manifest.

Thus, the *Akhirat* is also required so that both the *Karam* and the *Qahr* and the *Jalâl* and the *Jamâl* of Allâh Almighty can be fully manifested.

Although these attributes of Allâh are manifested in this world of ours, it is to a very limited extent because this world does not have the capacity to stand up to their full manifestation.

That is to say, whatever is manifest here of either the *jamâlî* (gentle) attributes or the *jalâlî* (glorious) attributes of Allâh, is limited. This world here would not be able to bear their full manifestation.

So, for this reason it is necessary that there be some world in which the *Jamâl* and the *Jalâl* of Allâh can be made fully manifest.

In essence, it is this manifestation that is the real purpose of the creation of the universe. Allâh Almighty has spread out the carpet of this world so that the fullness of His full attributes be made manifest. So, if the Hereafter was not there, then how could this purpose be fulfilled?

This is then a further reason why it is necessary that after this world comes to an end there should be another world.

The effect of belief in the Hereafter on human life.

So far, we have seen that the world of the Âhkirat is necessary, in terms of reason, for the reward and punishment of people's actions, and also for the full manifestation of the *Jalāl* and *Jamāl* and the *Qahr* and the *Karam* of Allāh Almighty.

After this, consider the importance of belief in the Hereafter in the correction of a person's life.

Any person who has any knowledge of the history of the world and any capacity for reflection will not be able to deny that there is nothing in the world and no human system that saves people from evil and misconduct to the extent that belief in the Hereafter can and does.

Undoubtedly, the laws of the government, social progress, awareness of harm and benefit, and personal honour, are all things that save people from evil and misconduct, but they are not as potent and effective as the certainty of reward and punishment after death, and belief in the Hereafter, provided that it is a living conviction and genuine belief, not just a nominal belief, and lifeless assent to a creed.

This is not simply a point of logic. Experience and observation shows that the societies in which evil and moral corruption are widespread are those which are devoid of belief in the Hereafter, in answerability to Allāh, and in reward and punishment after death.

Otherwise, the condition of those who have the light of conviction and faith is that they are even afraid of evil thoughts and whisperings, and also consider it necessary to keep their hearts clean from evil thoughts.

Those people who have some idea of the history of the world know that the most pure, clean, and civilised lives have been those of those servants of Allâh who have held to the conviction of answerability before Allâh, and reward and punishment after death, and the reason for this is that this conviction stops a person from the intention of evil even in those places where there is no one to see him and no danger of any legal accountability or punishment in this world.

Risâlat (Prophethood)

Once we believe in Allâh Almighty and in the hereafter, it becomes evident that we need to live our lives in obedience to Allâh Almighty. We then need to find out what His instructions are, and what things He has permitted us to do and what things He has prohibited us from doing.

It is also quite clear that Allâh Almighty does not explain all these things to each person individually.

Together with this, whilst the little bit of intelligence and understanding that a human being has is more or less enough to deal with matters of everyday life, it is certainly not enough to tell us what Allâh Almighty wants from us, and what is pleasing and what is not pleasing in His eyes.

To fulfil this need of ours, Allâh Almighty has sent us one Messenger after another. That is to say, in the same way that He has created the sun to fulfil our need for warmth and light, and created food for us to eat, He has also sent Messengers for our benefit so that we should be able to find our way in life.

In short, the arrangement he has made is that through certain selected servants, He passes on His instructions and His laws to His servants in general.

Thus *nabûwat* and *sharī'ah* are in reality things that we need. They derive from the *Rahmât* and *Rubûbîyat* of Allâh in precisely the same way that sunlight, water, and air, which are things that we need, and which Allâh Almighty of His *Rahmat* and *Rubûbîyat* has provided for us.

[*Rahmât* - Mercy
Rubûbîyat - From the word *Rabb*. This is a very broad word, and refers to the Attribute of Allâh that He sees to the welfare, the upbringing, and the flowering of each of His creatures, be it a simple flower, or an animal, or a human being. Words of this kind cannot be replaced by a one-word half-translation without losing the essence of their meaning, and in many cases, making a mockery of it.]

As to those people who consider *Dîn* and *Sharî'ah* to be some kind of a burden imposed by Allâh on people, and relate them simply to His attributes of *Hâkimîyat* and *Mâlikîyat.*, they are very ignorant, and do not understand the reality of things.

[*Hâkimîyat* - Rule
Mâlikîyat. - Ownership]

So, in essence, *nabûwat* and *sharî'at* are things that we ourselves need, and are a very great favour from Allâh, because it is through these things that a person can find his way to the pleasure of Allâh and so to Paradise.

Who should come as a Messenger?

Now a question arises. Who should come as a Messenger? On this issue some peoples have serious misunderstandings.

Some have said that Allâh Almighty Himself appears in some guise or another to give His laws to mankind. This is like saying that a king wants to send his proclamations to his subjects, so he puts on a postman's uniform, and in the guise of a postman, delivers his proclamations to peoples' doorsteps.

This kind of absurd and misguided idea can only come from, and can only be accepted by people who have no idea at all of who Allâh Almighty is.

"What has your Lord,
the Lord of Glory,
to do with the things
they ascribe to him?"

<u>A Messenger cannot be an angel. He has to be a human being.</u>

Some peoples have the idea that a Messenger has to be an angel because angels are holy and spiritual creatures. However, people like this have not understood that it is just as important, indeed even more so, that any Messenger should be able to understand the inclinations, nature, feelings, and emotions of the human beings to whom he is to be sent.

Angels are without any doubt holy and spiritual beings, but not only do they not have any experience of human inclinations and nature, or of human feelings and emotions, they are by nature not able to understand these things. For example, hunger, thirst, anger, envy, or sexual desire, are things that angels are in no way able to understand.

A little thought will make it clear that in human life there are many conditions that can only be understood when a person actually experiences them.

For example if a person has no sexual desire, that is to say that by nature he is devoid of this, then he will be completely unable to understand what it is. Similarly, someone who has never seen a dream in his sleep will not be able to understand what a dream is. This is not limited to these two things. Most human feelings are like this.

If a person has never tasted a mango in his life, it will not be possible to make him understand what is the taste of a mango. If a person is born blind, then even after a two-hour lecture, he will not have the slightest idea of the colour or the form of a rose

So, for mankind to be guided, it is necessary that whoever is to show people their way should be fully aware of their inclinations and feelings. Because this is a condition that only a human being can fulfil, Allâh Almighty has always sent only human beings as His Messengers.

As to the unthinking and unintelligent people who argued that a Messenger should be an angel, the Holy *Qur`ân* gives them this answer:

"Say [to them]:
If there were angels
walking calmly on the Earth
then we would send to them
an angel from the heavens
as a Messenger."

The meaning of this is that a Messenger should be of the same kind as those to whom he is sent, and for whose guidance he is sent.

So, if in place of human beings, the Earth was inhabited only by angels, and there was a need to send a Messenger for their guidance, then some angel would be sent to them as a Messenger.

However, in point of fact, the Earth is populated by human beings, and it is for <u>their</u> guidance that a Messenger is needed, so this need can only be fulfilledby sending a human being. Only he will be able to properly understand the problems of human beings and their conditions and their natural tendencies.

<u>If a Prophet was Allâh Himself, or an *avatar* of Allâh, or an angel, then the whole purpose of sending a Messenger would be lost.</u>

Apart frpm this, if we were to believe that a Prophet was not a human being, but Allâh Himself, or a son of Allâh, or an *avatar* of Allâh, or an angel, then the very purpose of sending a Prophet would be lost.

In such a case, the life of a Prophet would not be an example for the people for whose guidance he was sent. A human being can follow or imitate another human being, and he can also be required to do so. However, to imitate Allâh, or an angel, is not within his capability, and neither can he be required to do this.

If Prophets are believed to be Allâh Himself, or *avatars* of Allâh, or angels, then there is nothing wonderful about their lives.

Then, in addition to this, if Prophets are considered to be Allâh Himself, or *avatars* of Allâh, or angels, then there is no achievement in their lives. Think for example, if 'Isâ (Jesus) *alaihis salâm* is understood to be a human being, then his life appears as that of a high-minded and perfect human being, in which, in the face of oppression, we find restraint, forebearance, abstinence, trust in Allâh, knowledge and wisdom, love and compassion, dedication and sympathy.

Then, together with this, are the miracles given by Allâh, which are, in effect, a sign and a certificate of his truthfulness.

On the other hand, if he is to be seen as Allâh Himself, or the Son of Allâh, or an Avatar of Allâh, or an angel, then by this measure his life strikes our minds as full of astonishing weaknesses and defects.

Then his eating and drinking, his being born from the womb of Mariam, the Jews being able to persecute him in all kinds of ways, to completely disgrace and humiliate him, and even, (according to the accounts of the Gospels) crucify him - all these things, appear, not as achievements, but as deficiencies, for which no reasonable explanation can be given.

Even his miracles then have nothing remarkable or significant about them, because we see even greater miracles of Allâh every day in the very existence of the world He has created around us

In short, if anyone thinks at all about this question, he will reach the conclusion that any Prophet who is to be sent for the guidance of people should be from among their own kind, and that to regard Prophets as being manifestations of Allâh Himself, or Sons of Allâh, or Avatars of Allâh, or angels, is nothing more than ignorant and unthinking error.

Therefore, again and again in the Holy *Qur`ân* it is clearly proclaimed that all the Prophets sent in this world for the guidance of mankind were human beings.

The proclamation of the Holy *Qur`ân* that all the Prophets were only human beings

"We did not send before you
anything other
than human beings
to whom we gave revelation."
[Sûrah Yûsuf r.12]

Also, the Messenger of Allâh was repeatedly told to proclaim that he was simply a human being whom Allâh Almighty had appointed as His Messenger.

"Am I anything other
than a human being
sent as a Messenger?"
[Sûrah Banî Isrâ`îl r.10]

"Say: All I am
is a human being
like yourselves."
[Sûrah Kahf r.12]

This question has been made so clear in the Holy *Qur`ân* that it is an intrinsic part of the faith of any Muslim that every Prophet was a human being.

The definition of a *Nabī* that is given in the books of *'aqâ'id* [tenets of the faith] is that he is a human being to whom Allâh Almighty gives guidance, and to whom He gives His message, and whom He sends to His servants, and entrusts with the responsibilities of a Messenger.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that *nabûwat* or *risâlat* is an absolute necessity of life for us, and it is also clear that every *Nabī* or *Rasûl* has to be a human being, and that this is a basic doctrine and tenet of Islâm.

Prophets have constantly come in the world

After this, you should know that Allâh Almighty, who is merciful and kind, and who has created for mankind all the things that a human being needs in life, has also always fulfilled this need. Right from the time when he established the line of mankind in the world, he also established the line of the Prophets.

According to the needs of the time, in different ages and in different kingdoms and regions His Messengers have continued to come forward. We are not able to say how many Messengers came in all. Their number is not given in the Holy *Qur'ân*, and nor is there any need for us to know this. However, this much is clearly stated, that there is no kingdom and no place to which Allâh Almighty has not sent a Messenger. In one place it is stated:

"And for every people
a Messenger."
[Sûrah Yûnus r5]

and in another place:

"And there is no people
to whom a warner did not come." [Sûrah Fâṭir r3]

In another place it is stated:

"We have sent a Messenger
to every people."
[Sûrah Naĥl r5]

Of these Prophets, a few have been referred to by name, and something of their stories has been given in the Holy *Qur`ân*, while the rest have not been mentioned at all. However, our faith requires that we believe in all of them, and that we regard all of them as righteous and pure servants of Allâh and that we show respect to all of them. Without this, we cannot be Muslims. In the Holy *Qur`ân* this tenet and principle of faith is set out:

"We do not make divisions between any of His Messengers."

Faith in all the Messengers, and obedience only to the Messenger of the Age

So, for a person to be a believer it is necessary for him to believe in all the Messengers. However, it is only legitimate to obey the Messenger of the age in which a person lives. The reason for this is that the instructions that Messengers bring are not their own instructions. They are the orders of Allâh. The purpose of Allâh here is that whatever instructions he has sent for a particular age, those are the instructions that are to be followed during that age. Whenever new instructions are sent, then the previous instructions are withdrawn.

A simple example to illlustrate the cancellation of previous *sharī'ahs*

You can understand this by an example. Suppose there is a kingdom, and its inhabitants are very weak and downtrodden. They are poor, ignorance is widespread, and they are generally in poor health. The government then makes very easy laws for them, and gives them many favours and facilities.

However, after some time has passed, and the kingdom has made progress, and peoples' conditions have improved, the government

brings in new laws to fit the new circumstances. Now, after the new laws have been brought into effect, if any person continues to follow the previous laws, and does not obey the new laws, then he becomes an offender, and will be liable to punishment. He is disobeying the government, and is arrogating to himself the powers that belong only to the government.

So the *Sharī'ahs* brought by any of the Messenger of Allâh should be seen in the same light. According to the conditions of a particular people or of the people of some age, Allâh Almighty sends His instructions to them by means of one of His Messengers. Then, after some time has passed and these conditions have changed somewhat, He sends another Messenger, and at the same time, He makes some changes in the laws.

Now, the obligation of the people of that time is that they continue to believe in the previous Messengers, and continue to show respect to the laws they brought [because they are all laws given by Allâh Almighty], but at the same time, in every age, the laws that are binding on people are those given by Allâh Almighty for their own time, through the Messenger of their own time.

Even if a Messenger from a previous time were to rise from his grave and return, he would also have to accept and follow the laws given for that latter time. Thus the Messenger of Allâh has said:

"If Moses was alive today
he would have no choice
but to follow me."
[*Masnad Ahmad* and *Baihaqī: Shu'ab ul Imân*, from *Mishkât*]

This is also the reason why in the latter days, when, according to what we have been told in reliable *ahâdīth*, 'Isâ [Jesus] *alaihis salâm* returns to this world, he will follow the *sharī'ah* brought by Muhammad, because this *sharī'ah* comprises the orders of Allâh for this age, and the orders which He gave for a previous age have been withdrawn by Allâh Almighty Himself.

Therefore, to follow them now would amount to disobedience of Allâh. So, basically it is a principle of faith to believe in all the Messengers, and to regard all of them with equal respect, no matter to what people and what place they were sent, or in what time they were sent, or what their languages might have been.

However, obedience in any age is limited to the *sharî'ah* of the Messenger of that age.

The Prophets were not Lawmakers, but Lawbringers

From what has been said above it will be clear that the Anbiyâ (Prophets) *alaihis salâm* were not Lawmakers, but Lawbringers. Their role was not to make their own decisions on tenets and laws, but simply to receive them from Allâh and bring them to people. In this they could not add or subtract anything or make any alterations whatsoever.

In several places in the Holy *Qur'ân* there are references to the Unbelievers of Makkah from time to time saying to the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* that they were not happy with this or that point in what he was communicating to them. If he would make a few adjustments and changes to it in accordance with their wishes, then they would also support him. So, the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* told them that his responsibility was simply to pass onto them exactly what Allâh Almighty had told him. He had no option whatsoever to make changes or adjustments. Thus, in one place in the Holy *Qur'ân* in regard to this, it is stated:

"Say, it is not for me
to make changes to it
from my side.
All I do is follow
whatever is sent down to me."
(Sûrah Yûnus r.2)

and in another place:

"And he does not speak
from his own feelings.
This is nothing other than revelation sent down to him."
(Sûrah Najm r.1)

[Note: It seems from what some people say that they take the meaning of this verse to be that whatever the Messenger of Allâh said was all *wahî* (revelation), and that he never said a single word that was not *wahî*. This is not so.

The meaning of the verse is simply that in his capacity as a Messenger, whatever message he brought from Allâh, or whatever instructions he gave, was all *wahî*. In this there was nothing at all that was from his own self, or his own inclinations. In short, this verse relates to those things that he brought as a message or an instruction from Allâh. Otherwise, whatever ordinary conversation he had with his family, his servants, and his companions, this clearly was not revelation.]

In short, it is to be kept in mind that the instructions brought by the Anbiyâ *alaihis salâm* were not things on which they had themselves decided, but the instructions of Allâh, and they only received them and brought them to people

The *Ijtihâd* of the Messengers

At the same time, it did at times happen that some situation arose about which no definite instruction had come to them from Allâh Almighty by way of revelation. In such situations they might make their own *ijtihâd*. That is to say, in the light of the revelation they had already been given, and the knowledge they already had, and after careful thought, they would give instructions on the matter.

It did not happen that they gave any decision simply on the basis of their own inclinations and opinions.

Rather, on the basis of what they understood from the instructions that had already been given to them through revelation, they gave a decision as to the order of the Sharîah.

In general, whenever the Anbiyâ made this kind of *ijtihâd*, it was valid, and if it happened that there was some oversight, then they were immediately informed of this through revelation, and the matter corrected. When no such correction came, then this meant that the order of Allâh was what the Nabī had understood from his *ijtihâd*.

This then no longer remained a matter of *ijtihâd*, but became *mulhaq bil wahî* or attached to *wahî*.

The *Ijtihâd* of the *Mujtahid* Imâms

Since *ijtihâd* has been mentioned here, the nature of the *ijtihād* of the Imâms should also be understood.

Some questions have been set out clearly in the Holy *Qur`ân* and in the *sunnah* of the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam*. In these there is no question of *ijtihâd*. However, apart from these there are many situations about which no direct instruction can be found in the Holy *Qur`ân* or the *Hadīth* of the Messenger of Allâh. So, in these the *mujtahidīn* have had to exercise *ijtihâd*.

What this means is that they have to derive orders for these situations from what they understand to be the underlying principles of law and jurisprudence implicit in what is stated in the Holy *Qur`ân* and the *Hadīth*.

It comes in the *Hadīth* that when the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* sent Mu'âdh *raðiyallâhu anhu* to Yemen as *qâðî* (judge) and governor, he asked him: " On what basis will you decide the cases that come before you?" He answered, " First I will look in the Book of Allâh, then in your *sunnah*, (that is to say in your practice, and what you have said or decided). Then if I do not find a definite order in either of these two places, I will exercise *ijtihâd*."

The Messenger of Allâh was very pleased with this answer, and congratulated him, and gave praise and thanks to Allâh. (*Tirmidhī* and *Abû Dâ'ûd*; from *Mishkât*)

This *ħadīth* is in effect the foundation for the *ijtihâd* of the *mujtahidīn*.

The *Mujtahidīn* of the Ummah

Those of the *Şaħâbah* who, under the teaching of the Messenger of Allâh, had reached the level of *faqâhat* (expertise in understanding of law) all exercised *ijtihâd* as the occasion arose.

Then, at the end of the first century Hijrī, and during the second century, and also after that, many individuals were born who spent their lives on this work. The service to the *Dīn* which they made was to look deeply into the Holy *Qur'ân* and the *Ħadīth* and the way in which the *Şaħâbah* acted so as to derive principles of jurisprudence. Then, in the light of these principles they worked to derive orders for those questions about which we cannot find definite orders in the *Qur'ân* and *Ħadīth*.

In this way, the *fiqh* of Islam was compiled and systematized. Many *mujtahids* performed this service of the Dīn, but the *fiqh* of the Four *Imâms*, presumably because of their being more systematic and comprehensive, gained greater acceptance.

Who has the Right of *Ijtihâd* ?

In connection with *ijtihâd* it also has to be kept in mind that this is not something that everyone can do. Those elders who did this work had a knowledge of the *Kitâb* and *Sunnah* that was extremely comprehensive. They had seen, and in fact acquired their knowledge of religion from those people who had acquired their religious learning and training from the *Şaħâbah* themselves, or from their chosen students. Then, apart from this wide and authenticated knowledge, and this learning and training, their *taqwâ* and *ta'alluq* with Allâh was

of the highest degree. In essence, this work was the work of those people from whom Allâh Almighty took it.

The Ignorant *Mujtahids* of the New Enlightenment

However, today *ijtihâd* has come to be considered such a trivial thing that some people, after reading a few Urdû booklets, or at the most, some printed translations of *Qur'ân* and *Hadîth*, start to consider themselves as having the right to engage in *ijtihâd*,and start to deliver opinions on questions just like a *mujtahid*. It is about just such people that it comes in the *Hadîth*:

"They go will astray
and they will lead astray."
(*Şahîh Bukhârî* and *Şahîh Muslim*; *Mishkât*)

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This discussion of *ijtihâd* arose as an aside in connection with the *ijtihâd* of the Prophets. Otherwise the actual topic here is *nabûwat* and *risâlat*, and about this I have some further important points to put before you.

Nabûwat is Given, not Acquired

One thing about *nabûwat* (Prophethood) that needs to be known and understood is that it is something that is given, not acquired. Some things in the world are acquired through earning and effort. That is to say, even though these things are ultimately obtained through the decision and the gift of Allâh, nonetheless a person's own effort and earning plays a part in them - for example, obtaining some specialised knowledge or skill, or obtaining grain by cultivation, or obtaining money by trade. All these things are called *kasbî*, that is to say acquired.

Then there are some things that are obtained purely by the gift of Allâh, and no person's effort or work plays any part in obtaining them - for example being born with good looks, or natural intelligence and

understanding. Such things are called *wahbî* or given. Nabûwat is of this nature. It is not obtainable through effort and work. It is simply given to someone by Allâh Almighty.

Mu'jizât or Miracles

In connection with Prophethood it is necessary to understand what miracles are. Sometimes it happens that at the hands of a Prophet some extraordinary event occurs which is beyond the limit of their own powers, in other words, other people like them cannot make such things happen. Such events are called *mu'jizât* or miracles.

A Miracle is not an Act of a Prophet, but an Act of Allâh Almighty

Miracles are also not a Prophet's own action, but are in reality an act of Allâh Almighty, by means of which Allâh Almighty make it clear that this person is truly a Prophet. In our books of *'aqâ'id* (tenets) the definition of a miracle that is given is usually this:

A Miracle is an act of Allâh Almighty that is manifested at the hands of a Prophet to show that this Prophet is true.

So the occurrence and manifestation of miracles is something that comes from Allâh Almighty, and they are His direct action, and the Prophet is only the occasion for their taking place.

Miracles are also a Human Need

There are some people who are so unintelligent and weak in understanding that they will only accept that a Prophet is a Prophet once some completely extraordinary event occurs at his hands. So, for the benefit of unintelligent people like this, Allâh Almighty gives miracles to His Prophets. As for people who are intelligent and of sound disposition, for them the Prophet's life and his teachings are a sufficient miracle. Among the senior *Ṣaḥābah*, I do not think there was even one who needed to see a miracle to believe in the Messenger of Allâh.

In any event, miracles are not a need of a Prophet, or a requirement of Prophethood, but are a need of less intelligent people. Thus it is possible for no miracle at all to take place at the hands of a Prophet, or that a Prophet whose status is very high should show very few miracles, and that a Prophet of lesser status, because of there being large numbers of unintelligent and foolish people in his nation, should be given more miracles.

Thus, miracles are not the action of a Prophet, and are not a condition of Prophethood, and are not a measure of stature. They are, as I have said, a witness from Allâh Almighty to the truth of a Prophet, and according to need, are manifested as a sign, as and when Allâh Almighty wills.

From this you will have understood that it is not within the power of a Prophet to show miracles as he chooses. This is purely in the control of Allâh.

The Declaration of the Holy *Qur'ân* that Miracles are in the Decision of Allâh Almighty Alone

In several places in the Holy *Qur'ân* there are references to hostile and malicious unbelievers in Makkah saying to the Messenger of Allâh - "If you a true Prophet, then show a miracle like this or show a miracle like that." In answer this, the Messenger of Allâh is instructed by Allâh Amighty to tell them that showing miracles is not within his decision, and neither does he claim that it is. His work is simply to pass on the Message of Allâh Almighty. In Sûrah *Banî Isrâ'îl* it is related in detail that the unbelievers are asking him for this miracle and this miracle. Then finally, he is told by Allâh Almighty to tell them:

"Say to them - Am I anything more
than a human being
sent as a Messenger?
It is my Lord who has all power
and is free of all limitations."
(Sûrah Banî Isrâ'îl r.10)

i.e. Since when did I claim that it was in my power to show all kinds of miracles as you are frivolously demanding?

Similarly, on another occasion he was instructed:

" Say to them
that the signs (you are asking for)
are with Allâh alone
(and in His control.
It His decision to show them
or not to show them.)"
(Sûrah 'Ankabût r.5)

i.e. these things are beyond my control, so it is wrong for you to put such demands to me.

Together with the nature of a *mu'jizah*, the nature of *karâmat* and *istidrâj* should also be understood.

Karâmat

In the same way as Allâh Almighty, to show the truth of his Prophets causes extraordinary and supernatural events to take place at their hands, which other people like them would not be able to do, and through which even the most unintelligent of the unintelligent can understand that this is truly a Messenger of Allâh, and he has the backing of Allâh, so also Allâh Almighty at times causes supernatural events to take place at the hands of certain saintly and accepted followers of some true Prophet, again as a sign of their acceptance. Such an event is called a *karâmat*, and just as a *mu'jizah* is not the personal action or decision of a Prophet, but the action of Allâh Almighty, so also a *karâmat* is not the action of a *walî* (saint) but the action of Allâh Almighty, and is manifested, purely by His will and decision, at the hands of one of His accepted servants, and that servant is simply the occasion for it happening.

In the books of *'aqâ'id* and of Tasawwuf the definition of *karâmat* is given in this way:

"This is a supernatural act of Allâh Almighty manifested at the hands of one of His servants whose moral integrity and *taqwâ* is clearly evident."

Who is a *Walî*?

In the *Sharî'at* of Islam, and in the terminology of the *Qur'ân* and *Hadîth* it is this kind of person who is called a *walî*, and any extraordinary event occurring at his hands is then called a *karâmat*. In the absence of moral integrity and *taqwâ*, and in the absence of adherence to the Sharî'ah, there is no possibility of *wilâyat* (being a walî) or of *karâmat*.

It is clearly stated in the Holy *Qur'ân*:

"Are not the awlyâa of Allâh
the ones on whom
there will be no fear
and who will have no cause
to grieve –
(they are) ***those who had faith***
and also taqwâ."
(i.e. they had fear of Allâh
and lived according
to His sharî'ah.)
(Sûrah Yûnus r.7)

So, if any extraordinary and supernatural event takes place at the hands of such a person, it is called a *karâmat*, and is a sigh of his *wilâyat* (sainthood) and *maqbûlîyat* (acceptance in the eyes of Allâh).

Istidrâj

Then, if some peoples' lives are plainly devoid of *taqwâ*, and they clearly do not follow the Sharî'ah, and despite this, such things happen at their hands, then, if they are not witchcraft, or legerdemain, or some such trickery, then they are *istidrâj* from Allâh sent as a trial or test, as is related in the *Hadîth* about the Dajjâl, who will be able to give orders for rain to fall and for dead people to come to life.

In the books of *Tasawwuf* the following statement of Bâyazîd Bustâmî is frequently quoted:

"If you see a man who has been given signs and wonders, even if he flies in the air, do not be impressed by him until you have seen how he is in terms of what is ordered and what is prohibited, and in observing the limits set by Allâh and in fulfilling the requirements of the Sharî'ah."

(Futuhât e Makkîyah; quoted in *Ta'lîm ud Dîn)*

Karâmats are not a condition of *Wilâyat*

A point that should be borne in mind about *karâmats* is that it is not necessary that every *walî* show *karâmats*. Indeed, the greater number of *walîs* are people who never in their whole lives show any karâmats. Also, it is quite possible that some walî who never showed any *karâmats* in his whole life has a higher status than a *walî* who showed a large number of *karâmats*. The measure of status is only *taqwâ*.

"Indeed, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allâh are those with the most *taqwâ*."

The Consequence of Hostility towards the *Awliyâ* of Allâh is the Enmity of Allâh Almighty

At this juncture, there is another thing that should be understood. It is not a condition of îmân to accept a *walî* as a *walî*. However, if some

person genuinely is a *walî* of Allâh, whether he has left this world, or is still alive, then to have malice or hostility towards him is a grave misfortune and loss. It comes in a *ṣaĥîĥ ĥadîth*:

"Whoever is an enemy to a friend of mine, I declare war on him." (*Ṣaĥîĥ Bukhârî*)

Therefore our attitude towards the *awliyâ* of Allâh should always be one of courtesy and respect.

Of course, at the same time as maintaining an attitude of courtesy and respect, a person can still disagree with his opinion on some issue, because he is not in the position of a *nabî*, that is to say, he is not *ma'ṣûm* (free from error in matters relating to religion), nor is he *wâjib ul itâ'at* (i.e. it is not a religious obligation to obey every order he gives).

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This discussion of *wilâyat* and *karâmat* arose as a side-issue. The actual subject under discussion is *mu'jizât* (miracles). So, you will now have some understanding of what is the real nature of miracles.

Next, I wish to put forward some points relating to the miracles of the Messenger of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

The miracles of the Messenger of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*

Apart from historical and biographical accounts, there are also reports in *ṣaĥîĥ aĥâdîth* of many clear miracles of the Messenger of Allâh, and these things are so well-known that you *ĥazarât** will certainly know about them.

[*similar to 'you gentlemen'. The author was addressing a gathering of students attending a course]

For this reason, I do not intend to discuss them here. These are all historical events, and they are not visible to the present-day world.

Here I only wish to discuss that lasting, living miracle of the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* which lives on even today, showing its same miraculous character, and providing proof that the Messenger of Allâh really was what he claimed to be, just as much today as it did some 1400 years ago –that is to say, the Holy *Qur'ân*.

The Holy *Qur'ân* as a miracle

Although every Muslim knows and accepts in principle that that the Holy *Qur'ân* is one of the miracles of the Messenger of Allâh, I would at the same time like to place before you some elucidation on this point.

Some easily understood aspects of the singular nature of the Holy *Qur'ân*

There are several respects in which the Holy *Qur'ân* is an evident miracle.

However, here I only want to talk about those respects which any person can understand, and through thinking about which, any fair-minded person can even today reach certainty about the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

The Preservation of the Holy *Qur'ân*

First of all let us consider the preservation of the Holy *Qur'ân*. It is plain to see that most of the content of the Holy *Qur'ân* consists of things of which the Arabs of that time were unaware or which they found strange.

Then, even though its language is Arabic, this Arabic is very different and distinct from both their ordinary everyday language, and the

language of their poetry and public speaking. Scholars also know there is a very great difference between the Arabic of the *Hadīth*, that is to say the Arabic that the Messenger of Allâh himself spoke, and the Arabic of the Holy *Qur`ân*.

For these reasons, it was not particularly easy for the Arabs to memorize the Holy *Qur`ân*.

Then, the Qur`ân was not given in the form of written pages, but was sent down a little at a time onto the heart of the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

Furthermore, because at this time literacy was not common among the Arabs, it was not possible for several written texts to be made at the same time. Indeed, the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* himself was not able to read or write. Thus, he never set down a single verse of the *Qur`ân* in writing. Similarly, when others wrote verses down, he was not able to read them and check their accuracy.

This was also not a matter of a few pages, but of a good-sized book.

Keeping all these historical facts in mind, it is something to think about, that how is it possible that a book with a background like this could for 1400 years remain preserved so accurately that, be it in the East or in the West, or among the Arabs or the '*Ajam* (non-Arabs), or in Europe or in Asia, in Africa or in America, Muslims have only one version of the Holy *Qur`ân*, and right from beginning to end, there is not a single verse, indeed not a single letter, about which there are differences.

So, a fair-minded person should think whether this is not a clear proof that the Holy*Qur`ân* is the revealed book of Allâh Almighty, and that it must be His power that has preserved it unaltered. Otherwise, in this world, which is the object of every kind of alteration and change, it should not have been possible for it to remain unchanged in this way.

Furthermore, there is no other book that can be named which has had an origin like this, and has still been preserved in such a manner.

The quality of knowledge that It displays

The second aspect of the extraordinary nature of the Holy *Qur`ân* is the quality of knowledge that it displays.

Consider that the Holy *Qur`ân* was presented to the world as the word of Allâh by a person who in his whole life had not for a single day been a student at any school, and indeed was born in a place where there was not a single school, or even an elementary school, nor any interest in learning, nor any learned company, neither did he go anywhere else to study. Up to the age of forty years he was a complete stranger to all learning and all sciences. He remained simply a straightforward natural man, and one who was honorable and truthful in the highest degree.

Then suddenly, in his fortieth year, an extraordinary change took place in his behavior, and he declared that Allâh Almighty had selected him as His Messenger and that he was receiving revelation. Now he started to recite the verses of the Holy *Qur`ân* to the people of his home town, and told them that this was not his own word, but the word of Allâh Almighty. Precisely these same words are then before us today under the name of the Holy *Qur`ân*. It is clearly evident that everything that has been said in it to the world about the oneness of Allâh Almighty, and about His person and His attributes is without doubt the last word in knowledge and clear understanding, and on this I can challenge the whole educated world. Then, the ways in which difficult questions like the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement have been explained are quite extraordinary examples of exposition and argument.

Similarly, from the works of even the greatest men of wisdom and moral guides, no moral guidance can be produced which can begin to compare with the moral guidance that has been set out in it. Then

there are the laws that have been set out in it. No better laws have yet been formulated for mankind, nor is it possible to do so.

[It is worth noting that for over ten centuries the whole Muslim world functioned with precisely these laws as its legal code, and at the same time became the most politically and economically successful civilisation in the entire history of the world. If anyone who has any doubt about this, he needs to study some history. Also, those who think that "the modern world" is now more "advanced" than that are simply ignoring the foundation of misery and oppression, stretching from horizon to horizon, on which it is based.] [Trans.]

Then there is the system of worship that is put forward in the Holy *Qur`ân* for people to follow. If all the thinkers of the world were to get together, they would not be able to work out a better system. If we consider only the Prayer, and look carefully into its order and its underlying concepts, then our minds are left wonder-struck, and there is then no room for doubt that this formulation cannot possibly be the work of some illiterate individual.

So, one easily understood aspect of the extraordinary nature of the Holy *Qur`ân* is that the knowledge and understanding that it displays, and the moral advice, the laws, and the teachings and guidelines relating to all the different aspects of human life that it contains, cannot possibly be the outcome of the personal reflections and mental effort of an unschooled man from Arabia, who had never read a single book or stayed in the company of an educated man. To find a literary and intellectual masterpiece like the Holy *Qur`ân* coming from the hands of such a simple-natured, unschooled individual is, in the sight of the educated world, an even greater miracle than bringing the dead to life or restoring sight to the blind.

Then, the reason for him being given this lasting, living intellectual miracle is that his age was to be an age of learning and intellectual enlightenment. The previous age was more affected by wondrous events and astonishing marvels, while this age, and in particular our own period, is an age of arts and sciences, and at the present time,

the esteem and respect in which arts and sciences are held is much greater than any working of wonders.

[Check carefully in history, and you will see who laid the foundations of what we today call science.]

The singular eloquence and expressiveness of the Holy *Qur`ân*

Another well known aspect of the extraordinary nature of the Holy *Qur`ân* is that in terms of literary style it is in a class of its own, and the world has yet to put forward any composition that is as eloquent and as expressive, and will always remain unable to do so. This is not just a pious belief, but a simple reality.

There are countless examples of ancient and modern Arabic language and composition in the world – the writings of writers, the speeches of orators, the poetry of poets. The shelves of libraries are filled with books written in Arabic at different periods - on morals, history, biography, law, and other subjects. Thousands of short and long quotations from the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhi 'alaihi wa sallam*, and statements and speeches by his distinguished companions are also preserved in the books of *ħadîth* and *âthâr*.

If even the shortest of *sûrahs* of the Holy *Qur`ân* is put together with any of these, any person who has a good understanding of Arabic will see straightaway that the style of the Holy *Qur`ân* is completely distinct from, and superior to all of them.

I will tell you of a recent incident. From this, *in shâa allâh* you will get some idea of this aspect of the remarkable nature of the Holy *Qur`ân*.

Perhaps you have heard the name of *Allâmah* Tantâwî Jawharî. He is a contemporary Egyptian religious scholar who has a few years ago published a commentary on the Holy *Qur`ân*, under the name *Jawâhir ul Qur`ân*. It appears from this that he has paid a lot of attention to modern Western learning, and especially science and philosophy. He

seems to be particularly well read in the field of natural sciences. He recounts this incident:

"I was in Germany. One day, I was sitting with some Orientalist friends (that is to say, some German academics whose interest was in Arabic and Arabic studies). A distinguished scholar among them asked me if I held the view that is popularly held among Muslims that the Holy *Qur`ân* is a miracle in terms of its Arabic, and its eloquence and expressiveness.

I said, 'Yes, I am quite certain of that.'

He expressed great surprise, and said, 'I did not think that an educated and enlightened person like yourself would subscribe to popular notions like that.'

I said, 'There is nothing here to be surprised about. This is an academic issue, and it can be put to the test here and now. I will give you a concept, and I will ask you to express it in eloquent and expressive Arabic.

The concept is this: Hell is vast without limit.'

They all spent a long time thinking, and then composed some sentences. They then put them before me some sentences like:

'*Inna jahannama la wasî'atun.*" Verily Hell is indeed vast.'

'*Inna jahannama la fasîhatun.*" Verily Hell is indeed immense'

I then asked them to try further and to take as long as they wished. They said that they had reached their limit. I then said, 'Now look how the Holy *Qur`ân* has expressed this:

'On the day We will say to Hell,
"Are you full?" and it will say,
"Are there any more ?"

Allâmah Tantâwî writes that as soon as he read this verse from *Sûrah Qâf*, because they understood Arabic and its idiom, they sat up in surprise, and, slapping their thighs, acknowledged their defeat. In any case, any fair-minded person who really knows Arabic cannot doubt that in its eloquence and expressiveness the Holy *Qur'ân* is nothing short of a miracle, and that it could not possibly be the composition of an unschooled person like the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* who had no relationship at all with either poetry or public speaking.

In all these aspects the Holy *Qur'ân* is still a miracle today

Just as much as the Holy *Qur'ân* was a miracle 1400 years ago, it is still a miracle for the world today, and we hold it in our hands and say out loud to the world that because the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allâh is to last to *qiyâmat*, Allâh Almighty has made this miracle to remain and to shine out until *qiyâmat*, and as a proof for all human beings to be born right up to the end of the world.

Whoever has any doubt can about it can, with a little effort and attention, satisfy himself, and see its truth with his own eyes. After that, those who do not want to think or to see, they are the people who have no interest in pleasing Allâh Almighty, or in their own ultimate destination. So, what can their destination be, other than the everlasting punishment of Hell?

[The writer is here addressing a Muslim audience, so he is only setting out the outline of these arguments, not the detail. A person who wants to know the detail needs to ask some competent and reasonable person who understands the question. Answers are obtained by systematic asking, and thinking over the answers, not by doing nothing, nor by asking questions and arguing with the answer before actually grasping what it means. He should also keep in mind that he will not find out anything useful by reading books written by self-appointed experts who adopt a posture of neutrality, make their own religious and national prejudices their standard of truth, and then proceed to write propaganda against Islam, however intellectually respectable they may claim to be. Very few books written by non-Muslims do not fall into this category. Firstly, people who are engaged in making honest

inquiries do not write books on matters they have not finished investigating properly. Secondly (we contend, and others have to take into account the possibility) that people who do look into these matters honestly and carefully in fact end up becoming Muslim, so any books they write thereafter are not written by a non-Muslim. As to those people who claim to have studied the basic claims of Islam, and found them to be untrue, then our answer might be that we find them to be either untrue, or somewhat weak in understanding. In religion acceptance, denial, and agnosticism (=not knowing) are possible. Neutrality is not.] [Translator.]

Another Historical Miracle of the Messenger of Allâh

Another easily understood and living miracle of the Messenger of Allâh is the unbelievable spiritual and religious revolution which took place in the world through him, and which History has fully preserved for the benefit of generations to come.

Everyone, friend or foe, who knows the history of Islam and the Arabs knows what the moral and social condition of the Arabs was like before the Messenger of Allâh was sent, and how little relationship they had with Allâh Almighty, and how little concern they had for any life after death, how barbarous and ignorant they were, and how widespread tribal war, banditry, murder and pillage, indecency and shamelessness, gambling and drinking, oppression and injury, and suchlike wantonness and depravity were among them; then how only a few years of preaching, teaching, and moral training transformed them, and how dutiful to Allâh they became, how concern for the hereafter overcame them, what a model of civility and good character they became, how remarkable they became for their justice and mercy, and, even after overcoming the two great empires of Rome and Persia, and inheriting their thrones and crowns, how God-fearing and dutiful they remained. History has preserved this spiritual revolution of the Arabs in full detail, and even the most prejudiced enemy of Islam will not be able to find the courage to try to deny the historical fact that it was the preaching, teaching, and moral training of the Messenger of Allâh that brought about this transformation in the lives of those Arabs.

And after this, I say that this was, without question, one of his miracles, and if anyone denies that it was a miracle, then let him make use of all his scientific, intellectual, spiritual, and material resources to bring about a change of this nature on even a small scale and over the course of a hundred years.

An engaging and instructive discussion

In connection with this, I know of a rather engaging incident which is worth repeating here. From it I hope that you will very clearly understand this miracle of the Messenger of Allâh.

I have an uncle who passed away a few years ago - may Allâh Almighty grant him forgiveness. He was very intelligent, and had great presence of mind. He was a qualified *âlim* (religious scholar) and a natural debater, and also a successful doctor [i.e. in Yunânî (Ionian i.e. Greek) medicine]. He told me this story himself.

He was on a journey, and he had to wait at Lucknow station for two to three hours for a connecting train. He thought to himself that this time should be put to some useful purpose. After some thought, he decided to look for the offices of "Nigâr" magazine and talk to the editor, Niyâz Fatahpûrî. So he hired a *tânga* (horse cab) and reached the "Nigâr" offices. Niyâz Sâhib was there.

My uncle said to him, "I want to discuss an extremely important matter with you, and for this I want to take one hour of your time. At first Niyâz Sâhib, perhaps because of his orthodox appearance was not willing to give that much time. However, because of his insistence and the logic of his arguments he was forced to agree, and sat down and gave him his attention.

My uncle said to him, "From time to time I look at your magazine, and so I am aware of your intelligence, the force of your writing, and the range of your knowledge. The reason I have come is to ask you to make use of these abilities for a very valuable work. You can see how the world has become filled with evil and moral corruption. Even

leaving aside the world as a whole, take this city of Lucknow. Purely in terms of human and moral values, look at the debased condition of the people living here. How many of them are ignorant and uncouth, narrow-minded, and dirty. Then in every activity and every trade we find lying, fraud, self-interest, and untrustworthiness. In short, all the things that should not be in people are there, and all the good things that should be in people are not there at all. People have no culture, no honour, no integrity, no honesty. In such circumstances it is the duty of talented people like yourself to leave all other work and spend all your energies in reforming this corrupted humanity.

If people like yourself rise and take up this work, and in the same way as large projects are planned and then implemented in whole nations and countries, if you implement this work, then very soon the whole world will be transformed. So you can start with this city of Lucknow. For this work, I am ready to put myself completely at your service. Hopefully, in a year or two we will make Lucknow into a New Lucknow that will be a model for the rest of the world. For this project we will get the sympathy and help of every honorable and intelligent man, and in a short time we will be able to make the whole world into a decent and honorable world." After listening to this, Niyâz Sâhib said, "Maulânâ, what kind of fantasy world are you living in? You seem to be an extremely simple-minded man. Even if we had hundreds of people like yourself and myself, this could not be done."

My uncle asked him, " Why can it not be done? You are a first-class writer. You have the power of the press in your hands, and you are probably a very good speaker as well. I can also write and speak a little in my broken way, and as soon as we start, we can be sure that all the newspapers and magazines will give us their support, and hundreds and thousands of writers and speakers will stand up together with us, and you will see that in a few days the whole atmosphere will change, and a new spring will start in the world. Even if we are not able to change the whole world, then at the least we will be able to change our country, or our district. Be resolute, and then see how what I am saying will come about."

Niyâz Sâhib again said, "Maulânâ, you appear to be a very simple-minded man, and perhaps you know nothing of this world. To change this world is not something that is within your power or mine."

My uncle said, "All right, I will ask you one thing. I think you are a student of history, and you are certainly aware that thirteen and a half centuries ago a work like this did take place among the Arabs, and this took place among a people who were thoroughly illiterate and unmannered, and in terms of ignorance, coarseness, and every kind of evil and immorality, were far in advance of the ignorant people and ruffians of our times. This work took place at the hands of a person who had no knowledge of reading and writing. He had no press at his disposal, nor was there any newspaper or magazine to make his voice carry further, nor did he have any team of speakers with him, nor were there any poets with him to spread his message among the people. So when one single illiterate man without any equipment was able to change a whole people, then why should you be in despair about educated people like yourself and myself, when have pens in our hands and the power of the press as well, and when there are thousands of people like ourselves in the world to give us support, and also governments who will certainly give us their full support in this? I say that if that transformation among the Arabs took 20 years, then with all our facilities we should be able to bring about a change like that in one year. All it needs is that we take courage, and make up our minds to leave all other work and spend all our energies on this."

Niyâz Sâhib said, "Maulânâ, I don't seem to be able to make you understand. The fact is that this work is not within your or my capacity, and you really have very unreal and fanciful ideas about yourself, and myself, and the world we live in."

My uncle then said, "All right, now tell me, as a historian, do you or do you not accept that thirteen and a half centuries ago a transformation like this actually did take place among the Arabs?" Niyâz Sâhib said, "Yes. This is an accepted fact. Who is going to deny it?"

My uncle said, "That is the answer I wanted to get from you. Some time ago I read an article you wrote denying the existence of miracles. The reason I took this time from you was to explain to you the reality of miracles, and to show you that you also believe in miracles. Essentially, a miracle is something manifested at the hands of a Messenger of Allâh that other people in his position would absolutely not be able to do. You have now repeatedly acknowledged that the kind of moral transformation that took place among the Arabs through the unschooled Messenger of Allâh is something that you, despite having the best of facilities, regard yourself as completely incapable of bringing about even in this city of Lucknow."

My uncle said that as he finished saying this, his time was also up. Despite Niyâz Sâhib, perhaps to make up for his initial attitude, insisting repeatedly that he should sit for a while longer, there was no time to spare, and he had to leave for the railway station.

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The fact of the matter is that the spiritual and religious transformation which took place as a result of the preaching, teaching, and moral training of the Messenger of Allâh is, like the Holy *Qur'ân*, one of his living, historical miracles. However, the shameful condition of the Muslim world today has put a thick curtain in front of this, and made it difficult for the world to understand.

Another living miracle.

While on the subject of miracles, there is another intellectual miracle I would like to mention which, *al hamdu lillâh*, is also preserved and living, and whoever wishes can still think over it, and satisfy himself of the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allâh, and of his being what he said he was. It is also something which I find that the more I look into it, the more my own faith finds new strength - and this is the prayers of the Messenger of Allâh *şallalâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

May Allâh Almighty give the best of rewards to the compilers of the *hadîth* and fill their graves with the light of His mercy. Together with

the other actions and statements of the Messenger of Allâh, they have preserved in their books the prayers he made on different occasion and under different circumstances. Then afterwards, some servants of Allâh have collected these prayers into separate books, and today there are dozens of large and small books in which the prayers of the Messenger *şallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* have been compiled in different ways.

[One very complete collection of his prayers is *"Hişn ul Haşîn"* which is published with an Urdû translation and notes. This book is very solid. A brief, but comprehensive and sufficient collection is *"Munâjât Maqbûl"* which has been published with translation and notes by Maulânâ Âshiq Ilâhî Bulandshahrî, and educated people will find it very instructive.]

[English translations are for several good and easily, although not commonly, understood reasons, embarrassingly poor, and at the present time, I do not know of any that I could in any way recommend. However, to explain these reasons would require more space than is available at this point. At the same time, there are many peoples in the world who live next to different Muslim peoples, and share the same languages. They can quite easily read the accepted translations used by Muslims. This lecture was given in India, and here Hindî speakers can easily follow anything in Urdu if it is read out or transliterated into Hindî letters, which is very easily done.] [Translator.]

If any person who has even an iota of reverence for God and spirituality in him, or the slightest consciousness of these things, looks at these prayers or even a translation of them, and thinks about them, then he cannot have any doubt that these prayers could only have come from the illuminated heart of a person who had the highest degree of understanding of humanity and indeed, of all of creation, and the highest degree of consciousness of Allâh Almighty, and in whose heart there was not the slightest trace of insincerity.

Al hamdu lillâh, this poor servant is filled with this *nûr ul yaqîn* (light of conviction) by every one of these prayers, and I say openly that, perhaps because of my particular cast of mind, my own sensitivity and

intuition derive more assurance and conviction about the *nabûwat* of the Messenger of Allâh *ṣalallâhu álaihi was sallam* from these prayers than from anything other thing.

Anyway, the prayers of the Messenger of Allâh *ṣallallâhu álaihi wa sallam* are also one of his shining and living and lasting miracles. Indeed, the truth is that if Allâh Almighty has put any light at all in a person's heart, then every aspect of the life of the Messenger of Allâh, indeed his every mannerism, is a miracle.

My discourse on the subject of miracles has become long, but the points that have come up are things which *in shâa allâh* will rejuvenate everyone's faith, and also for the future, they can be remembered as things to again rejuvenate one's faith when the occasion arises, and also, *in shâa allâh*, when the need or occasion arises, you can put them before those people who have the misfortune that they do not yet have faith in the Messenger of Allâh, and invite them to think over them.

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I now want to make one further and final point about *nabûwat* and *risâlat* as such.

The meaning of being a *nabî* and of recognising someone as a *nabî*

Once you have understood the reality of *nabûwat* and *risâlat*, then it will be clear to you that recognising someone as a *nabî* or *rasûl* is not the same kind of thing as recognising someone as a poet, or recognising someone as a leader of a people, or recognising someone as a doctor.

Recognising a person as a poet, or leader of a people, or doctor, does not put us under any obligation to accept everything he says. However, recognising someone as a *nabî* or *rasûl* means that we accept that in questions of the Unseen, whatever he tells us, and whatever instructions he gives us, are being given to us from Allâh Almighty. Therefore, all of it is absolute truth, and there is then no room at all for anyone to question it, or to doubt any of it.

For this reason, it is the absolute duty of every human being that he does not carelessly or easily accept some person as being a *nabî* or *rasûl*, but only accepts someone as a *nabî* or *rasûl* of Allâh after serious and careful inspection and examination. However, once he accepts someone in his heart and his mind as a *nabî* or *rasûl*, and puts his faith in that person's *nabûwat* and *risâlat*, then it logically follows that everything he says has to be accepted, and he has to say *âmannâ wa ṣaddaqnâ* (we believe and we affirm) to whatever he tells us, and accept every order he gives as being the order of Allâh Almighty, and obey it accordingly.

Thinking about this purely in rational terms, if it is accepted that some person is a Messenger of Allâh, then it also has to be accepted that it is not possible for him to be dishonest, or devious, or mentally unstable, or deluded. He is receiving revelation from Allâh Almighty, and whatever he tells us about those unseen realities that are beyond the reach of our experience and understanding, and whatever orders he conveys to us, these are all things which he knows through the revelation that is coming to him from Allâh Almighty.

Now think for yourselves, after accepting all this, to then be in doubt about something we have been told by a Messenger of Allâh simply on the basis that we do not understand it, or to be confused and in two minds over some commandment because we do not understand the wisdom and philosophy behind it – is that anything other than ignorance and stupidity?

However, these days many supposed intellectuals display just this kind of foolishness when they talk about matters of religion. In my view, this kind of thing is blatant *kufr*, and is even more illogical than open denial of that Messenger.

<u>For the sake of setting the mind at rest, there is no objection to looking for the reasoning and wisdom behind something.</u>

Certainly, if a person believes in a Messenger of Allâh, and accepts that, since he is the Messenger of Allâh, whatever information and orders he conveys are all true and valid, and come from Allâh Almighty, and accepts them all as valid and binding on him, then there is no objection if after this, for the sake of extra peace of mind and serenity of the heart, he tries to understand everything in religion, and to see the underlying wisdom behind every order, and to this end, himself ponders over things, consults books of this nature, or looks for help from people who are competent in this field.

Al hamdu lillâh, we have no doubt whatsoever that whatever the Messenger of Allâh has said, and whatever has reached us from him through reliable and certified channels, is all in full accordance with reason and nature, and there is not a single thing in it that does not measure up fully to the yardstick of reason and wisdom. However, the question does arise whether every person's reason and wisdom is itself up to standard.

<u>The Reach of Our Intelligence</u>

The position of our intelligence is that, before the invention of the microscope, which now enables us to see bacteria in water, if

someone had told us that in every drop of water there were thousands of tiny living animals moving around, we would have considered him to be talking nonsense. Similarly, if two hundred years ago someone had told us there were vehicles which could fly in the air under their own power and carry several hundred people at a time at a speed of 500 miles per hour, we would have said that what he was saying was sheer fabrication. Now these things are simply there in front of us. So, to take this same weak intellect which is not able to understand things in this world that within a few years become everyday realities, and make it the standard by which to measure the statements of the Messengers of Allâh *alaihim us salâm* is most certainly complete foolishness.

The point is that a person should only accept someone as a Messenger of Allâh after a thorough inspection and examination of his credentials. However, after accepting him as such, he has to basically shut his eyes and accept whatever he has said, and has to regard obedience to his every order as obligatory. This is what reason dictates, and this is what every Messenger has taught.

To accept a part of what a Messenger says and to not accept part is also *kufr*

For this reason, the person who accepts one part of what a Messenger says, but rejects another part, is not a believer. It is clearly stated in the Holy *Qur'ân* that to accept every decision of a Messenger is a condition of Faith.

It is stated in Sûrah Nisâa, r. 9:

"So no, by your Lord,
they are not believers
until they make you the judge
in whatever
they dispute among themselves,
and then do not find
in themselves

any dissatisfaction
with what you decide,
and accept it in full."

In another place it comes:

"And it is not for a believer
that when Allâh
and His Messenger
have given a decision
on some matter
that he have any choice
of his own in that matter."
(Sûrah Aħzâb; r. 5)

So, it has been repeatedly stated in the Holy *Qur'ân*, and is clearly evident in terms of reason, that once a person is accepted as being a Messenger of Allâh, then it is necessary to accept every order that he gives, and everything that he says on matters of religion, and to deny anything he says amounts to denial of his being a Messenger of Allâh.

The aberration of those who reject the *Ħadīth*

At this point it is appropriate to mention an aberration of some people of the present time. You will have heard of some people who say that in Religion the *Hadīth* of the Messenger of Allâh are not to be taken as authoritative – that is to say, to accept them and to follow them is not necessary. It is only necessary to believe the Holy *Qur'ân*, and only the Holy *Qur'ân* is authoritative in matters of religion.

Basically, this error derives from not understanding the position of a Messenger. These people have understood the Messenger of Allâh to be something like a postman, whose work is only to deliver a letter. They think that the task of the Messenger of Allâh was simply to receive revelation from Allâh Almighty and to pass it on. In reality, a *nabī* is also appointed by Allâh Almighty to explain the principles and orders of Religion.

Just as much as it was the work of the Messenger of Allâh to pass the Holy *Qur`ân* on to His servants, so also it was his work to explain the details and practical implementation of the principles of faith and of religious living that are only set out in outline in the Holy *Qur`ân*. For example, the command to perform the Prayer is given in hundreds of places in the Holy *Qur`ân*. However, the way it is to be performed and its detail regulations are not given even once. Similarly, the things that it is permitted or prohibited to eat are only set out in the Holy *Qur`ân* in brief outline.

For example, there is no definite statement in the Holy *Qur`ân* whether eating say, dogs or insects is permitted or prohibited. It only states in principle:

"He has brought them permission
for all good things
and prohibition of all foul things."

So, in explaining the detail of all these things, the Messenger of Allâh is deputed by Allâh Almighty and is under His instructions, and the detailed orders like this which he has given to his followers all come through revelation from Allâh and the knowledge He has granted him, and it is through these orders that the pattern of life in Islâm is set out.

In the Holy *Qur`ân* itself, in the same way as one task of the Messenger of Allâh has been specifed as "reading out to them His *âyât*," (i.e. reading out to them the verses of the Holy *Qur`ân* and passing on to them what Allâh Almighty has said in His own words), so also a second task of "teaching them the *Kitâb* and the *Ḥikmat*," and a third task of "cleansing them," have also been specified. Similarly, in another place in the Holy *Qur`ân* itself, addressing the Messenger of Allâh it comes:

"so that you may explain
to mankind
what has been sent down
to them."

(i.e. the Holy *Qur`ân.*)

In other words, you are to explain to them the detail of what has only been stated in outline.

So, those people who say that his task was only to pass on to people the Holy *Qur`ân*, and that the only basis of proof in religion is what is in the Holy *Qur`ân*, and that apart from this, we do not need anything else for our religion, that is to say, we do not need the *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah*, are essentially denying these statements that Allâh Almighty himself has made:

"teaching them the Kitâb
and the Ḥikmat,"
and:
"cleansing them,"
and:
"so that you may explain
to mankind
what has been sent down
to them."

Essentially, the whole treasury of authenticated *ḥadīth* is the *tafsīr* of these verses, and it is by means of this treasury that we can derive benefit from this work of the Messenger – that is to say, teaching the *Kitâb* and the *Ḥikmat* , moral purification, and explanation – in virtually the same way as the *Sahâbah Kirâm* did.

Apart from this, if Allâh Almighty had wanted to simply send down the Holy *Qur`ân*, then a better way of doing this would have been to cause a written sheet to descend from the heavens onto the roof of the Ka'bah, or to cause its walls to reverberate so that the people of Makkah should all hear His Word, just as Mûsâ (Moses) *alaihis salâm* was addressed from a bush (or tree – the word *shajarah* is not specific.). In this way, the people of Makkah would have been much more impressed. The reason for selecting a man for the position of Messenger is that only a human Messenger can clarify the meaning of

the message, explain the details of the kind of life that Allâh Almighty wants from His servants, and put his own life forward as an example to be followed.

In essence, the party that denies the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah*, and, using the name of the Holy *Qur`ân*, tries to mislead the *ummah*, even though they claim to believe in the Messenger of Allâh as a Prophet, in reality have not understood what a Prophet is. What they say sounds very nice and very easy to those people who wish to remain Muslim, but at the same time, want to escape from the restrictions of the *Sharī'ah*. Once the principle of denying the *Ḥadīth* is accepted, then the way is open for them to make permissible every kind of profligacy and self-indulgence, because the details of the life of faith, good works, and scrupulousness which is called for in the Holy *Qur`ân*, and which the Messenger of Allâh has explained, are only to be found in the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah*. In the Holy *Qur`ân* not even the details of the *ṣalât* are given. Basically, this is an extremely inflammatory and destructive kind of religious sedition.

The shared mistake of the propagators of Unity of the Religions and of those who deny the *Ḥadīth*

You probably know that some well-educated and religiously-minded Hindu gentlemen of our country say that all religions are basically one, and also propagate the view that for salvation it is not necessary to follow any particular religion, saying that every religion is equally true, and that therefore salvation can be found through following any religion. Among them, Pandit Sundar Lâljī Allâhabâdī is particularly well known, and I personally have some acquaintance with him. Only Allâh Almighty knows people's hearts, but to my knowledge he is well-meaning and kind-hearted. He has made it his personal mission to persuade Muslims of this idea. Together with being a believing and practicing Hindu, he is persuaded that he believes in Muhammad as a Messenger of Allâh, and in the Holy *Qur`ân* as the Word of Allâh.

[On the face of it, this seems a very strange claim to be making. However, for a person who does not understand the real nature of prophethood it does not

seem strange. Even such an eminent person as Gândhîjî fell into the same error because, despite his status as a *mahâtmâ*, he had not understood the actual nature of prophethood and the position of a prophet. In his mind there was no contradiction between believing in Muhammad as a Messenger of Allâh and living according to the Hindu religion. He did not consider it necessary to follow the Sharî'ah brought by the Messenger. This is all the consequence of not understanding what the position of a prophet actually is.] [Author]

One of the things that he says, to Muslims in particular, is that the *Sharî'ah* which we call the *Sharî'ah* of Islâm (and which separates Muslims from people of other religions) is not in the *Qur`ân*, and that even the Prayer that Muslims perform is not from the *Qur`ân*, but from elsewhere. In the *Qur`ân* there is only an order for "*salât*". So if someone sits in a *mandir* (Hindu temple) and meditates on Ishwar, or prays, then he is also fulfilling the order for *salat* given in the *Qur`ân*.

These are strange times indeed, where the very *Qur`ân* brought by Muhammad is being used for the purpose of breaking the Muslims away from the Prayer taught by Muhammad and the *Sharî'ah* brought by him.

Essentially, the error of those among the Muslims who deny the *Hadîth* and the *Sunnah*, and of people among the Hindus like Pandit Sundar Lâljî, have the same root, that is not understanding the position of a prophet. Accepting what either of them say also has the same outcome – that Muslims should, God forbid – leave the detailed pattern that the Messenger of Allâh, Muhammad, in accordance with the orders of Allâh, has set out for fulfilling the requirements in principle which have been given in the Holy *Qur`ân*, and which can only be known through the *Hadîth* and the *Sunnah* and through which the structure of life in Islam is completed.

The actual subject under discussion here is not this *fitnah* or this issue. It is the general issue of prophethood in the context of *'aqâ'id* and *Imâniyât*, and in particular, that from the point of view of both faith and logic, once it is accepted that a certain person is a Messenger of

Allâh, it is necessary to accept everything that he tells us from the knowledge he is given by Allâh Almighty. This reference to the rejectors of the *Ḥadīth*, and the proponents of Unity of the Religions arose in the course of this, and it is just as well that it came up, because it was also a point that needed to be made. Now we can return to the original subject.

The three tenets which have so far been under discussion i.e. *tawhîd, âkhirat*, and *risâlat*, are called the *ummahât ul 'aqâ`id* – the primary tenets or the fundamental tenets.

The significance of the *ummahât ul 'aqâ`id*

Even though apart from these there are a number of important tenets in which it is necessary for a person to have faith and full conviction for him to be a Muslim, these three tenets have a particularly significant position. The whole structure of the life contained in the Message brought by the Messengers of Allâh *alaihimus salâm* stands on these three foundations, and only that person will be able to adopt that life who accepts these three basic things.

In effect, these are the three intellectual and doctrinal bases of the code of life of Islam. For this reason, they have a special importance in religion, and for this reason they have been given the name *ummahât ul 'aqâ`id. Al hamdu lillâh* all three of them have now been fairly well covered.

Remaining *'aqâ`id*

It is now necessary to say something about the remaining *'aqâ`id*. It has been explained above in some detail that once some person is accepted as being a prophet it is necessary to believe in everything that he says they has come to him from Allâh Almighty, and denial of any single thing like this is a denial of his prophethood and is *kufr*. Therefore, it is necessary for every Muslim to believe with full conviction in every truth of which the Messenger of Allâh has informed people.

However, for those Muslims who did not live during the life-time of the Messenger of Allâh, and whom his teachings have reached through some intermediary (which is our own situation) for them this applies only to those teachings and tenets that are established as having come down from the Messenger of Allâh through clear-cut and reliable channels, about which there is no room for doubt or confusion, and in which there is no room for differing interpretations, and which in every age have been so commonly known that ordinary people with only the most elementary knowledge of religion are aware of them.

[If ordinary Muslims start to fall into some misunderstanding on matters of doctrine, then the scholars of religion are obliged to stand up and correct them by going back to the basic source texts from which all doctrine is derived. So, if something continues to be accepted by even the most ordinary Muslims, and no scholar stands up to contradict them, then this is in itself proof that all the scholars of religion also believe what the general people believe.]

Those things that are not clear-cut and universally known to this degree (even though they are sufficiently well-established for us to be satisfied of their authenticity) do not have this position, and the same ruling does not apply to them. Denial of them, even though it constitutes some degree of deviation, is not *kufr*.

Two types of *'aqâ'id*

When you have understood this principle, then you will automatically understand that there are two kinds of *'aqâ'id*, or to put it another way, there are two levels of *'aqâ'id*.

One is of those which are established as having come from the Messenger of Allâh by channels that are so clear-cut and reliable that there is no room whatsoever for doubt, and which in every age have come down with such unanimity (*tawâtur*) and are so widely known, that there is no room left for differing interpretations. The second are those which, even though they are sufficiently well-established to be

accepted confidently, do not have the degree of definitiveness and unanimity that allows for no differences in interpretation.

The "*ummahât ul 'aqâ'id*", that is to say *tawhîd, risâlat, qiyâmat* and *âkhirat* belong to the first category of *'aqâ'id*. Other than these, the following *aqâ'id*: - that Holy *Qur'ân* is the Book of Allâh, - the existence of *Jannat* and *Jahannam* in the hereafter, - the existence of angels as a distinct species of creation, - the coming of many Messengers before the Messenger of Allâh, - that Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets, that is to say the last Messenger who is to come, - all these are also *'aqâ'id* of this category. They are established as having come from the Messenger of Allâh with the same degree of certainty and definitiveness as *tawhîd, risâlat,* and *qiyâmat,* and have the same degree of *tawâtur* and have in every age been as widely known and accepted.

Therefore the ruling on them is the same. If any person denies any one of them, he ceases to be a Muslim, even if his denial is made behind the shelter of some form of interpretation.

<u>*Đurûrîyât* of Dîn</u>

Those things which are established as coming from the Messenger of Allâh to this degree are referred to in the terminology of the scholars of religion as *đurûrîyât of dîn* – that is to say, those religious truths and teachings which are established with complete certainty as being the teaching of the Messenger of Allâh and on which there has in every age been such unanimity (*tawâtur*) and which have been such common knowledge that no scope remains for differing interpretations.

<u>The second level of *'aqâ'id*</u>

The punishment of the grave, some details of *qiyâmat* and the *âkhirat*, such as the *mîzân* (scales), the bridge, the intercession, and seeing* *Allâh* Almighty, can be put forward as examples of the second level of *'aqâ'id*. The appearance of the *Dajjâl* before *qiyâmat*, the coming

down of Îsâ (Jesus) *'alaihis salâm*, and various other signs of *qiyâmat* also come in this category.

*[more about this further on.] [Trans}

That they have come from the Messenger of Allâh is well established, but not to the same degree as the *ðurûriat of dîn*. Therefore, to doubt them, or on the basis of some from of interpretation, to deny any one of them, even though it is serious error, cannot be categorised as *kufr* or *irtidâd*.

On the subject of *'aqâ'id* there is another important point that needs to be understood.

The beginning of differences in *'aqâ'id* within the *ummah*.

There were no differences of opinion on *'aqâ'id* among the *sahâbah raðiyallâhu 'anhum*. However, during their time, when countless numbers of people from different peoples and different kingdoms came into Islâm, they also brought with them their old ideas and their habits of thinking. It was not possible to completely correct their old way of thinking (and in this world of cause and effect, there was no way in which that could have been done).

So it was from here that we find the origin of the differences of principle in *'aqâ'id* and ways of thinking that subsequently created so many sects in the *ummah*. Differences of opinion in secondary and less important matters is not something that creates sects, and indeed, it is something that is natural and unavoidable. Sects are founded on the basis of differences on matters of *'aqîdah* and principle, and as I have said, there was nothing of this between the *Sahâbah raðiyallâhu anhum*. In terms of their *'aqâ'id* and their way of thinking they were all one *jamâ'at*. We can then in principle divide the innumerable groups which came afterwards into those who are *Ahl us Sunnah wa'l Jamâ'at* and those who are not *Ahl us Sunnah wa'l Jamâ'at*.

The basic principle of the *Ahl us Sunnah wa`l Jamâ'at.*

The defining mark of the *Ahl us Sunnah wa`l Jamâ'at* is that, together with accepting the Holy *Qur`ân* as the foundation of religion, they understand the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam*, that is to say his statements and his practice, to be its exposition and the elaboration of what it sets out in principle, and that whatever has not been explained in the Holy *Qur`ân* itself is then to be found in the *Sunnah.* They therefore regard the *Sunnah* as also being an intrinsic part of religion and something that has to be followed.

Then, together with accepting the Book of Allâh and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger in this way, they also regard the *Şahâbah* as the measure by which these things are to be understood. That is to say, whatever they understood to be the intent of anything in the Book of Allâh or the *Sunnah*, and whatever rulings they were all agreed on also have to be followed, and no Muslim has the right to hold any contrary opinion on the rulings and decisions on which they were all in agreement.

In the view of the *Ahl us Sunnah wa`l Jamâ'at* the *ijma'* (consensus) of the *Şahâbah* on any matter of religion means that the matter becomes definitive, and to disagree with it is then error, because without any doubt the *Şahâbah* knew better than anyone else the environment, the atmosphere, the conditions, and the language in which the *Dîn* came.

Then, they acquired the *Dîn* direct from the Messenger of Allâh, and had the benefit of his company and his training. Thus, no one can have a better knowledge of religion and understanding of the spirit and the intent of the teaching of the Messenger of Allâh than them. So religion is whatever they understood it to be.

In short, the *Ahl us Sunnah wa`l Jamâ'at* regard the consensus of the *Şahâbah* on any question of religion as being decisive, and in their view there is no room for disagreement with it. So, this is the guiding principle of the *Ahl us Sunnah wa`l Jamâ'at*, and indeed the reason

for being called the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* is that, after the Book of Allâh, they have attached so much importance in religion to the *sunnah* and the *jamâ'at* of the *Ṣahâbah* and have bound themselves by them.

Other parties

The position of other parties is that they do not attach this much importance to the *sunnah* and the *jamâ'at* of the *Sahâbah*.

The first of these parties to come into being were the *Khawârij* and the *Shî'ah*. Although there are many branches of the *Shî'ah*, they are almost all have this in common, that they regard the *Ṣahâbah Kirâm* as being positively not reliable, and indeed, most of their sects regard the main body of the Sahâbah as being, *ma'âdh allâh* (Allâh preserve us), opportunists who made war on religion.

As to the status of the *sunnah*, they give that status to the words and actions of their *imâms*. Indeed, the whole foundation of their religion is quite simply the *riwâyât* (reports) of their *imâms*. In the view of some of their sects, the Holy *Qur'ân* itself is doubtful and is not a reliable source. Therefore, to them the basis of religion is only the *riwâyât* of their *imâms*.

The position of the *Khawârij* is that they accept the Holy *Qur'ân* as being completely preserved and a definitive basis, and in their view, the *Sunnah* has more or less the same importance as in the view of the *Ahl us Sunnah*. However, they do not regard it as necessary to follow the collective *maslak* and the collective decisions of the *Ṣahâbah* as do the *Ahl us Sunnah*. In effect, in their view it is possible that in understanding some *haqîqat* (truth) of religion, or some issue in the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah* the whole *jamâ'at* of the *Ṣahâbah*, or some very large number of them, could be wrong, and then people coming after them could understand the matter correctly. The *Ahl us Sunnah* regard this view as error, and indeed a fountainhead for hundreds of deviations.

During this early period of Islâm, after the *Shî'ah* and the *Khawârij*, many more sects came into being, for example the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahamîyah*, the *Marjîyah*, the *Qadarîyah*, the *Jabarîyah*, plus many others. As far as I have understood, the essential basis of all the differences between these sects and the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* is that the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* hold firmly onto the *ðhâhir ul kitâb* (the plain meaning of the Scripture) and the *Sunnah*, do not make complicated interpretations to make the basic texts conform to their own imperfect intelligence and opinions, and regard the consensus and unanimous view of the *Şahâbah* in matters of religion as being a definitive source which it is obligatory to follow, while these other sects give so much importance to their intellect, opinion, and sensibility, that on this basis they will impose interpretations on the texts of the *Kitâb and Sunnah*, and have no qualms about opposing the collective *maslak* of the *Şahâbah Kirâm*.

In effect, unlike these other sects, the distinguishing mark of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* is that they hold firmly onto *"mâ ana 'alaihi was aş'hâbî,"* (what I and my *şahâbah* are on) that is to say the *sunnah* of the *Rasûl* of Allâh *şallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* and the path of the *Şahâbah Kirâm*, and in opposition to this do not pay any attention to their own intellect and opinion, or the *qîla wa qâla* (arguments and objections, chatter, interminable discussions) of the rest of the world. Anyway, the differences of *'aqâ'id* and outlook between the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* and these other sects are all the outcome of this basic difference of approach.

By way of example I will now quote some points of controversy. From this, *in shâa allâh*, this basic difference in approach will open up and become even clearer to you.

Differences over the committing of a major sin, and their basis

It is a well-know *mas'alah* of the *Khawârij* that by committing a *kabîrah* (major) sin a person becomes *kâfir*, and that in the hereafter his fate will be the same as any *kâfir*. Their basis for this *mas'alah* is in some of the texts in the *Kitâb* and *Sunnah* in which the term *kufr* is used in

relation to certain *kabîrah* sins, or where phrases like *"lâ îmâna lahu"* (he has no îmân) or *"laisa minnâ"* (he is not one of us) or *"lâ suhamu fil islâm"* (he has no share in Islam) are used, or where warnings of *la'nat* (curse) and punishment are given.

In contrast to them are the *Marjīyah* sect, who say that to escape the punishment of the hereafter, *îmân* is sufficient. If, after accepting *îmân*, a person commits major sins for the whole of his life, he will still not go into *Jahannam*. All that will happen is that, in comparison to those believers who have not committed sins, his status and rank will be somewhat lower. These people take as proof those texts in which the tidings of *Jannat* are given only on the basis of *îmân*, and they impose interpretations on whatever texts are contrary to this.

Similarly, the *Khawārij* impose their own interpretations of whatever texts are contrary to their *maslak*, and from which it can be understood that by committing a major sin a person does not become a *kâfir*.

However, the basic issue is that the leaders of both these sects, from whom their lines started, had their own concepts and inclinations. The inclination of the founders and original proponents of the *Khawârij*, because of certain historical reasons, was towards regarding committing of a major sin as a *kufr*, and counting the person who committed a major sin as a *kâfir*. The inclination of the leaders of the *Marjīyah* was that sins committed after accepting *îmân* should be regarded as something very light and unimportant. So, whichever texts seemed to each sect to accord with their inclinations and concepts, they took as a source, and those which were contrary to their view they either found some reason to deny, or imposed some interpretation onto them.

Then the *Ahl us Sunnah*, rather than following this kind of approach, looked, in accordance with their principles, at the way in which the *Şahābah Kirâm* understood this question, and what their *maslak* was on this. So this was what they took, and this was that committing a major sin is not absolute *kufr* through which a person comes out of

Islam, as the *Khawârij* maintain, and neither is it as trivial and unimportant a matter as the *Marjîyah* maintain, but is a cause for *adhâb* (punishment) and a cause for *la'nat* (being cursed). However, if Allâh *ta'âlâ* so chooses, he can forgive it.

So this is what the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* hold, and they maintain the meaning of all the texts on this subject to be whatever the *Şahâbah Kirâm* understood them to mean.

The question of the *ru`yat* of Allâh

The second question which I wish to quote by way of example, is the question of the *ru`yat* (seeing) of Allâh *ta'âlâ* in the Hereafter. It is clearly referred to in sound *ahâdîth*, and the Messenger of Allâh *sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* has given the people of *îmân* the good news that in *Jannat*, apart from other gifts, they will be granted the vision of Allâh, and that this gift will be more pleasurable and delightful than all the other gifts of *Jannat*.

In one place in the Holy *Qur`ân* it comes:

"There will be faces on that day
that are radiant and fresh,
looking towards their Lord."

The *ðhâhir* (plain) meaning of this is that the obedient servants of Allâh *ta'âlâ* will be radiant, and that they will be given the felicity of seeing the *jamâl* (beauty) of Allâh *ta'âlâ*.

The basis of the denial of the *Mu'tazilah*

Since it is the distinguishing mark of the *Mu'tazilah* that in matters of *dîn* (religion) they put a greater burden on reason than that poor thing is capable of bearing, and want to believe things only after understanding them with their intellects, and since the question of the *ru`yat* (vision) of Allâh *ta'âlâ* was something they could not understand, and their reason contested it, they ended up rejecting it.

The essential basis of their denial is their intellectual *shub'hah* (doubt, confusion) that only a material entity with corporeality, colour, and boundaries can be seen by the eye, and can also only be seen when it is placed in front of the eyes and at a distance to which they can reach.

So, how can they see Allâh *ta'âlâ*, who is free of all matter and attributes of matter, and is not in any place or direction, but is *lâ makân* (without location) and *warâ' ul warâ* (behind what is behind, or beyond the beyond)?

[Rather than try to translate phrases like this, it is better to stick to the Arabic phrases coined by people who really did know what they were trying to say. *Warâ'* is the common Arabic word for behind or beyond. Behind whatever we see is what we do not see.] [Translator]

So the *Mu'tazilah*, because of not being able to understand the question of the vision of Allâh *ta'âlâ* with their intellects, rejected it, and imposed *ta'wîlât* (interpretations) on the *nuṣûṣ* (primary texts) and came forward with a variety of explanations of them, and this is also the path that the *Shî'ah* took. In this issue, they have the same views as the *Mu'tazilah*.

The basis for the affirmation of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at*

However, the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at*, saw that it is clear from *ṣaḥîḥ* (sound) *aḥâdîth* that the Rasûl of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* has given *ṣâf bashârat* (definite tidings) of this, and also that what the *Ṣaḥâbah Kirâm* understood from these *nuṣûṣ* (primary texts) was that the people of *Jannat* would be given the vision of Allâh *ta'âlâ*, and that this was their *'âmm 'aqîdah* (universally accepted belief). They therefore chose to follow this, and paid no attention to the intellectual doubts of worshippers of reason like the *Mu'tazilah*. This is the basic difference in their way of thinking between the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* and other *firqahs* (sects).

From this you should also not think that the *madh'hab* (school of thought) of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* is opposed to reason. In truth there is not a single *'aqîdah* (tenet) of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* that is contrary to reason. *Al hamdu lillâhi*, to remove this *shub'hah* (doubt) the *mutakallimîn* (logicians) of the *Ahl us Sunnah*, have shown the *me'qûliat* (rationality) of every individual point at issue with extremely clear proofs.

If you look up this question of the vision *of* Allâh *ta'âlâ*, you will see that the *Ahl us Sunnah* have given such precise answers to the doubts of the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Shî'ah* that any *'aql-e-salîm* (sound mind) will be *muṭma'in* (put at rest). If anyone wants to refer to the detailed arguments on this question, then he can look in the famous book of Hađrat Shâh 'Abd ul 'Azîz Dehlwî against the Shî'ah, entitled "*Tuhfat-e-Iithnâ Asharah*", or in "*Aqâ'id ul Islâm*" by Mawlânâ 'Abd ul Haqq Dehlwî.

On this topic I will bring up one brief point, so that if any of you has any *khaljân* (misgiving) in his heart, it can be dispelled.

Answer to the intellectual doubt of the *Mu'tazilah*

The basis of the intellectual doubt of the *Mu'tazilah* is that they understand that in the absence of the ways, laws, and conditions which relate to seeing things in this world, it is absolutely not possible for anything to be seen. This basic proposition is wrong from the outset.

The *Mu'tazilah* cannot deny that Allâh *ta'âlâ* sees the entirety of His creation, both material and non-material. Now, since Allâh *ta'âlâ* is Himself *warâ' ul warâ'*, it cannot be said that any created thing is in the *mahâdhât* of Allâh, that is to say, is directly in front of him. However, despite this, *Allâh ta'âlâ* sees everything.

So it is clear from this that the principles that the *Mu'tazilah* consider to be universal are basically not universals.

The condition of the limited power of seeing that has been given to our eyes in the world is that it can usually only see material things, and then only when they are in front of them, and at a certain distance. To then on this basis go and deny the vision of Allâh *ta'âlâ* in the Hereafter is not valid, because there every capability of the people of Jannat will be incalculably greater. So there a person will be given a power of vision that will be of a different order, and able to enjoy the vision of Allâh *ta'âlâ*.

We see in this world that by various strategies and by means of instruments like the microscope or telescope we can see things that people in the past could not even imagine being able to see. So, there is nothing far-fetched in Allâh *ta'âlâ* giving the people of *Jannat* a capacity to see which will extend also to the vision of Allâh.

The intellectual doubts on the basis of which the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Shī'ah* denied the vision of Allâh had no force in them from the outset. Now, in these times, new discoveries and new inventions should put an end to all fatuous doubts like this. Today all kinds of things are on sale in every shop which, if had they been described 500 years ago, people would have said were entirely impossible. I would say that now, in this age, if anyone says about any religious truth that it does not accord with his understanding, therefore he does not believe it, then he is merely making a declaration of his own stupidity.

Allâh *ta'âlâ* has said in the *Qur'ân Majīd*:

"We will show them our signs
on the horizons
and in their own selves."

The inventions of our times have made it easy for people to understand hundreds of issues which people, out of their foolishness *(hamâqat)* used to regard as contrary to reason.

[1] In other words, if something that seemed to be an absurdity or an impossibility can become everyday reality in such simple and obvious ways

then what about the possibilities of things that are presently difficult to understand becoming just as self-evident in ways that are not simple and obvious, regardless of any speculation as to what those ways might be? 2. On this subject Imâm Ghazzâlî says quite simply that the seeing of that world is not the same as the seeing of this world. 3. Question: What is the absolute limit of the meaning of the verb "to see"? Who is in a position to see the answer to that question? 4. What is the meaning of the word "see" in the sentence: "Can't you see that you can't see God?" 5. What does empty space look like? Can you see it? Why not? It is a physical thing and is there right in front of you. 6. You can see the smile on someone's face. Now, can you see the smile without seeing the face? Now, can you see what is behind the smile without seeing the smile? If you can't, that doesn't mean that it is not possible. 7. All in all, it can be clearly seen by anyone who can see anything that there is more to seeing than meets the eye.] [Translator]

This has all gone rather far off the main track. All I wanted to show you was that the *Mu'tazilah* and others denied the vision of Allâh *ta'âlâ* simply on the grounds that their intellects were not capable of understanding it, and the *Ahl us Sunnah* simply believed it and accepted it as a tenet when they saw that this is what they understood from the plain meaning of the texts *(ðhâhir un nuşûş)* and when they found the *Şañâbah Kîrâm* maintaining this tenet *('aqîdah)*.

The *mas`alah of jabr* and *qadr*

Similarly, the *Qadariyah* and the *Jabariyah* gave priority to *jabr* or *qadr* on the basis of their own intellectual inclinations (*rujñânât)* and rational deductions, and made whatever texts *(nuşûş)* they found to be more or less in accord with their preferred view *(rujñân)* they took as authority *(sanad)* for their doctrine and whatever texts were plainly contradictory to it, they either denied by means of some legal device *(ñîlah)*, or else imposed some interpretation *(ta`wîl)* on them.

The *Ahl us Sunnah*, on the contrary, opted to follow the *ðhâhir un nuşûş* (plain meaning of the texts) and the *maslak* of the *Şahâbah Kirâm*.

They saw that the *Ṣahâbah Kirâm* believed everything in the world and peoples' every condition to be the outcome of the *qađâa* and *qadr* of Allâh *ta'âla*,and despite believing each person to be *ṣâĥib ul irâdah* (i.e. to have his own free will) did not believe him to be *mukhtâr mutlaq*, (i.e. to have absolute free choice) as the *qadariyah* maintain, neither did they believe him to be *majbûr-e-maĥđ* (completely under external control) like minerals and plants as the *jabariyah* maintain. So they made this their *maslak* and *'aqîdah*, and took the meaning of all texts to be whatever the *Ṣahâbah Kirâm* understood from them, and this was also their plain meaning *(đhâhir maṭlab)*.

(It is irresponsible to try to translate words like *qadr* and *qađâa*, because the whole issue revolves around trying to understand what they do or do not mean, and to avoid misunderstanding them. To translate them is necessarily to interpret them in the framework of all the philosophical error and confusion of the people into whose language they are being translated. This frustrates the entire purpose of the discussion, and leads to people interpolating pre-Islamic ideas into Islam, and this is a negation of religion. What is authoritative is what we have been told in the *Qur'ân* and Hadîth about these things, and whatever we have been told here we have been told in Arabic, and not in any other language. It is therefore necessary to insert the original Arabic words into other languages, and not substitute other words.) [Translator]

In summary, in contrast to all the sects, the distinguishing feature and sign of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* was that they understand the path followed collectively by the *Ṣahâbah Kirâm* to be *wâjib ul ittibâ'* (obligatory to follow), and their basic principle is that in any religious truth and any issue in the *Kitâb and Sunnah*, whatever was the way in which the united body of the *Ṣahâbah Kirâm* believed and understood it, as long as there was no difference of opinion between them on it, to believe and understand it in that way is necessary, and there is no scope for anyone for any difference of opinion or re-evaluation of the matter.

Clarification of the path of the *Ahl us Sunnah* in a letter from 'Umar bin 'Abd ul 'Azîz

'Umar bin 'Abd ul 'Azîz in one of his letters which the *muhaddithîn* have reported together with its *sanad*, has presented a very clear exposition of the *maslak* of the *Ahl us Sunnah*.

Someone had asked him about this question of *qaðâ* and *qadr*. In his answer he first stressed the importance of *taqwâ* and of obedience to Allâh and his *Rasûl* and of following the Sunnah and accepting it as an obligation.After this he says:

"Make obigatory for youself what the *qawm* (i.e. the *Şahâbah*) were pleased with, because they were acting on the basis of a knowledge with which they were fully conversant, (i.e. what they had been taught by the Messenger of Allâh) and had a penetration of insight that was fully adequate, and were stronger than us in the depth of their understanding, and were far ahead of all others in the excellence (*faðîlat*) of their knowledge and understanding of *dîn*, so, if what you are putting forward was in fact guidance, then this would mean that you had overtaken them in attaining it."

After this, in a few lines, he explains the issue. What he says is briefly that the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* has explained the question of *taqdîr* in many *ħadîth* and the *Şahâbah Kirâm* took this '*aqîdah* directly from him, and during his lifetime, when they were before him, and afterwards as well, their '*aqîdah* and their conviction (*yaqîn*), and what they continued to explain to others was that whatever happens in the world, and whatever we do is from the beginning in the '*ilm* (knowledge) of Allâh and written on the *lawħ-e-maħfûdh*, and the *taqdîr* of Allâh has already decided it. After writing all this he says:

"So if you say that no *âyat* like this has come down, or Allâh has not said like this, then think for yourself that they have read whatever *âyât* you have read, and in its interpretation they knew what you do not know, and after that they said that all this is written and is *muqaddar*.

(kulluhu bi kitâbin wa qudir)" So, the *maslak* and basic principle of the *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jamâ'at* is precisely what 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azîz has said in this letter – to have full confidence on the *jamâ'at* of the *Şahâbah Kirâm* in matters of *dīn*, and in comparison to theirs, to understand one's own knowledge and understanding to be defective and inadequate, and to adopt full *taqlīd* (unreserved acceptance and following) of their collective decisions.

There is great safety and great protection in this way, and this has always been the *maslak* of the united body *(jumhûr)* of the *ummat*, and this is the sound *maslak* that is described in the *hadīth* as *"mâ ana 'alaihi was aş'hâbī."* (What I am on, and my *Şahâbah*.)

<u>Protection from *fitnahs* is to be found only in following the *salaf-e-şâliĥīn*</u>

In essence, for those who come later, well-being lies in following the path of their virtuous predecessors *(salaf-e-şâliĥīn)*. When a person becomes free from this, then the Shâytân can easily get him entangled in some error and *fitnah*.

[A *fitnah* is something that is a test for people, and usually refers to something that entices people, and leads those who follow it astray.] [Translator]

Those who have held firmly onto the *dâman** of their *salaf-e-şâliĥīn*

*[*Dâman* is a Persian word meaning the lower part of a *qamīs* or any long robe. *Qamīs* gives the French word *chemise*, which now means a shirt. So, since the men-folk of the English-speaking world have long since shortened their shirts and tucked them into their trousers, they no longer have any *dâman* for their children to hold onto, and neither do they any longer have a word for it. The word *skirts* has acquired a feminine connotation, so there is now no way that I can see to translate this word sensibly into English.] [Translator]

remained protected from every kind of *fitnah*, while those who placed their trust more in their own intellects and their own understanding

and knowledge, and did not consider it necessary to adhere to even the collectively agreed decisions of their predecessors, fell victim to the *Shayṭân*.

Whatever misleading ideas and misguided sects have arisen in the past, or have now arisen in our own times, are all the result of placing more reliance on one's own knowledge and understanding than on the *salaf-e-ṣâliĥîn*, and considering oneself free from any need to adhere to their way. Allâh ta'âlâ give a good reward to the elders of the *Ahl us Sunnah* for understanding this secret so well, and, by giving so much importance to the *Saĥâbah Kirâm raðiyallâhu 'anhum* and to following the *salaf-e-ṣâliĥîn* who followed their path, saving the *ummat* from becoming entangled in the nets of the *Shayṭân*.

In this time following the *salaf-e-ṣâliĥîn* is more necessary than ever

In this time of ours, when the plague *(wabâ)* of freethinking* *(âzâd khayâlî)* has become universal,

*[For a person who is lost in the wilderness, to take a zig-zag path looking for a road back to town is good sense. For a person who is already on the road to do the same is simply a good way to get himself lost in the wilderness. So, the kind of freethinking that is good for people who are being brought up under some false religion is not good for people who are being brought up under true religion. So, in this context, to refer to freethinking as a plague is perfectly fair. The fashion for freethinking in the Muslim world today is also not the result of active thought. It is a result of becoming passively infected with the ideas of other people who are in a quite different position. I say this because people have a conditioned reflex to regard this kind of comment as narrow-minded. Roads are long and narrow, and lead somewhere, provided they are followed. Open fields, in contrast, are broad, spacious, and lead nowhere, except perhaps from one road to another.] [Translator]

and large numbers of people, after reading only Urdû booklets [or worse still, English booklets] start to consider themselves as having the right to delve into matters of religion in a *mujtahidânah**, and indeed, absolutely unrestricted manner, there is more need than ever to stick

firmly to, and to encourage others to stick firmly to the principle of following the *salaf*. In this there is protection from every *fitnah* and every deviation, and it is in this that safety lies.

*[*Mujtahidânah* = in the same way as a *mujtahid*. The word *Mujtahid* is a technical term meaning a person who is competent to derive principles and laws from correlation and analysis of the primary texts of the *Qur'ân* and Hadīth.] [Translator]

A misleading fallacy

At this point it is also necessary to make mention of one fallacy. Some people, in whose view following the *salaf* does not have that much importance say that the essential thing is only the *Qur'ân* and the Hadīth, and in questions of *dīn* they do not accept anything other than the *Qur'ân* and Hadīth as a source of authority.

There is no doubt that this rallying cry *(na'rah)* is very pithy and effective and is also in itself valid. However, these people use it in a very wrong sense. In effect, this is a case of *"kalimatul haqqi yurīdu bihâl bâṭil."* (Words of truth being used to express falsehood.)

In truth, in the view of all people of *îmân* the basic source of *dīn* is only the *Kitâb and Sunnah*. However, the *Kitâb and Sunnah* is not a speaking person who can immediately give us an answer in our own language to any question we might ask him. On the contrary, the only way in which something can be known from the *Kitâb and Sunnah* is for a person who is fully conversant with the language and the manner of expression of the *Kitâb and Sunnah*, and also fully conversant with and adept in the *maqṣad* (objectives), *mizâj* (disposition), and *uṣûls* (principles) underlying the legislation *(tashrī')* of the *dīn*, to think deeply and come to understand the objective *(maqṣad)* and the intent *(manshâ')* of the *Kitâb and Sunnah*.

Now the principle and methodology followed by those of us who proclaim the superiority of the *salaf-e-ṣâliḥīn* in understanding of *dīn*, and thus understand that safety lies in following them, is that when we

come to know that the *salaf-e-şâliĥîn* understood this or that to be the intent *(manshâ')* and objective *(maqşad)* of the *Kitâb and Sunnah*, and that this was the agreed *(muttafiqah) maslak* of all of them, or of the main body *(jumhûr)* of the *salaf*, then we understand only this to be valid, and regard following this to be necessary, and regard any new opinion that is contrary to it as a *shayţânî* enticement *(taswîl)*.

Then those people who do not want to follow the *salaf-e-şâliĥîn*, and who place more reliance on their own knowledge and understanding than on their knowledge and understanding, what they do is follow their own opinion and understanding, and then, taking the name of the *Kitâb and Sunnah*, call on others to do the same.

So the actual difference between their way of thinking *(ţarz-e-fikr)* and their way of working *(ţarz-e-'aml)* and ours is not that they regard the *Kitâb and Sunnah* as the basic authority *(aşlî sanad)* in *dîn* and we the *salaf-e-şâliĥîn*. It is rather that, in determining the intent of the *Kitâb and Sunnah* we regard the understanding and thinking *(fikr)* of the *salaf-e-şâlihîn* as more reliable, while they rely more on their own ideas and their own understanding, and want other people not to follow the *salâf-e-şâliĥîn*, but to follow them instead.

The *Qur'ânî* rallying-cry of the *Khawârij* and the answer of *Sayyidunâ* Alî

This is in effect exactly the same issue that arose between the *Khawârij* and *Sayyidunâ* Alî *raďiyallâhu 'anhu*.

There is a well-known incident during the *khilâfat* of Sayyidunâ Alî *raďiyallâhu 'anhu* when the *Khawârij* had gathered at a certain place and *Sayyidunâ* Alî went there to try to explain some issue to them. They raised a cry, "We will only accept the *Kitâb* of Allâh. Whatever you want to persuade us, establish it from the *Qur'ân*. We don't want to hear anything except the *Qur'ân*." (Just as so many misled sects today raise the same cry.)

Sayyidunâ Alī *radiyallâhu 'anhu* took a large and thick volume of the *Qur'ân* Majīd and, striking it with his hand in front of them, said:

"O book! Speak to the people! O book! Speak to the people!"

(i.e. Explain to these people the truth on the things they are fighting over.)

Sayyidunâ Alī struck the book repeatedly with his hand, all the time saying the same thing. At this, some of the *Khawârij* themselves started saying, "O Amīr ul Mu'minīn, that book is paper and is written in ink. It is not a thing that can talk and give answers."

Sayyidinâ Alī then started to explain to them the realities of the point at issue, quoting only *âyats* of the *Qur'ân Majīd*, answering their objections and refuting their fallacious ideas.

What he was trying to make them understand was that, in real terms, following the *Qur'ân Majid* has to take the form of following what some person who knows and understands the *Qur'ân* understands from the *Qur'ân*.

What I want to point out from this incident is that the people and the new sects in our time who do not accept adherence to the way of the *salaf* and say that they only believe in the *Kitâb* and *Sunnah* have exactly the same outlook as the *Khawârij*, and want people to break away from adherence to the *salaf* and enter the ranks of their own adherents. Those empty-minded people who accept what they say in reality simply break away from adherence to the *salaf* to become adherents and followers of these people, and it is by this means that new sects and new groups are created in the *ummat*.

All in all, as far as we are concerned, reliance on the *salaf-e-ṣâliḥīn* and adherence to their way are absolutely necessary, and it is in this that the protection of the *dīn* and *imân* of the Muslims in general lies.

[The word *salaf* –
Since the time this book was written, a party identifying themselves by the name *Salafī* has become prominent. The Salafīs restrict the use of the word *salaf* to mean the *Ṣaḥābah Kirâm* only. What they are saying is that instead of following what the rest of the *Ummah* call the *salaf-e-ṣâliḥîn* in following the *Ṣaḥâbah*, we should ourselves follow the *Ṣaḥâbah* direct in following the Qur'ân and Sunnah. This means that they put themselves on an equal footing with those scholars whom the rest of the *Ummah* call the *salaf-e-ṣâliḥîn*, and will put their own understanding of whatever they consider to be the viewpoint of the *Ṣaḥâbah* ahead of the interpretation of those scholars. Thus, they more or less disregard the consensus of the *jumhûr* of the scholars of the Muslim world for the intervening fourteen centuries.

The position of the orthodox scholars is that the most reliable way of establishing the understanding and practice of the *Ṣaḥâbah* is through uninterrupted continuity of consensus among the scholars of religion on the whole body of the Sharī'at, going all the way back from now until the time of the *Ṣaḥâbah* themselves, and not simply through individual reading and interpretation of a large volume of isolated fragments of information in the form of the incomplete collections of *Ḥadīth* that still remain with us today.

Anyway, it should be kept in mind that the way in which the present-day *Salafī* party uses the word *salaf* is not the same as the way in which this word is being used in this book.]

Taqlīd in legal questions

This whole discussion has been on *îmâniyât* and *'aqâ'id*. In our view, in matters of *furû'* (subsidiary issues) and in legal questions, safety lies only in *taqlīd* of the *â'immah-e-haqq* (the *imâms* of the four schools) and adherence to the *salaf*, especially in these times, when *ijtihâd* has become so easy and so cheap that people who are not even able to understand an Urdû translation of *Qur'ân* or *Ḥadīth* regard themselves as also having the right of *ijtihâd*.

For those *ahl-e-'ilm* who are not settled in their minds about *taqlīd* in respect of a particular legal approach, it is also absolutely necessary that when it comes to those questions about which the *mujtahid imâms*, and particularly the *â'immah arba'ah*, (the Four Imams) after

careful examination, were all in agreement, they should not choose some new path. Then, in those questions over which they had disagreements, they should also not put forward some new opinion that is separate from all of them.

[Although Shâh Walīullâh Dehlawī *rahmatullâhi 'alaihi* had a *mujtahidânah* style of thinking, in "*Hujjatullâhil Bâlighah*," when discussing this topic, he clearly states: "The *ummat*, or say rather the part of it that is to be relied on, is united, right down to the present day, on the legitimacy of and necessity for *taqlīd* of these four *madhâhib* which have been compiled and set down in writing, and in this there are *maṣâliḥ* (important considerations) that are not hidden, particularly in these days when aspirations in learning have become exceedingly low, and people follow their fancies, and everyone is much impressed with his own opinion."] [Author]

Not adhering to this principle leads to carelessness *(bê ihtiyâṭī)* and to becoming opinionated *(khud râ'ī)*, and also creates disorder and confusion within the *ummah*. For those servants of Allâh who also want to undertake some service in the cause of *dīn*, it is especially necessary that they should not through their ideas or their way of working, create confusion in the *ummat*, and that they avoid saying things that will alienate people or make them suspicious of them.

Shâh Walīullâh Dehlawī *rahmatullâhi 'alaihi* in "*Fuyûḍ ul Haramain*" says that (during the time he was staying in Madīnah) the Rasûl of Allâh* *sallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* impressed upon him three things that went against his own inclinations. One of these was *taqlīd* of one or other of the four *madhâhib*.

*[This refers to seeing the Rasûl of Allâh *ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* in a dream. Shâh Walīyullah was a scholar of sufficient stature that he did have the right to form his personal opinion on points at issue between the Four Imâms.] [Translator]

The wisdom in this was that, for the work of religious reform that was to be undertaken in Hindustân by the *silsilah* (line of successors) of

Shah Walīyullah *rahmatullâhi 'alaihi* it was necessary that, in relation to *dīn* and *madhhab*, the people in general should not become alienated from him or apprehensive about him, but should have full confidence in him.

Anyway, for people like us it is absolutely necessary. In the condition in which the *ummat* now is, new *ijtihâdât* from ourselves are not what it needs. What it needs is practical effort to generate *īmân* and the life of *īmân*, and for people to dedicate their lives to this without asking for anything in return.

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I hope that what has been presented up to this point on *īmâniyât*, *'eqâ'id*, and *dînî tarz-e-fikr* will, *in shâa allâh*, be *kâfī* and *shâfī*.

Now it remains to present in the same way some outline of the second *part* of *dīn*, that is to say, the part relating to practices.

Wallâhul muwaffiq

Translator's Note

Translation is a rather slow and laborious task, and at the same time, a heavy responsibility. So far I have only managed to complete the first part of this book. I do not know when I will find the opportunity to undertake its translation.

Ml Manzoor Nomani's book is made up of two parts. The first part relates to faith and creed. The second part relates to practice as a believer. Faith (which includes understanding) is the foundation for practice, and where faith is weak or confused, practice will certainly be defective in one way or another. Today, we find a lot of confused argument about all kinds of matters of practice. Often the real problem is not in the point at issue, but in peoples' basic understanding of the foundations on which religion itself and its laws are based. There is therefore a lot to be said for leaving aside discussion of matters of practice until such time as a person has developed a reasonably firm grasp of these foundations. So, while this book is in two parts, the first part can stand on its own as an independent book, and there is much to be said for reading this part first and thinking carefully over it before going onto the second part.

It therefore seemed to me that rather than delay the publication of this section further until such time as the full book is completed, it would be better to publish this much as it stands, and perhaps publish the second part as a separate book when it is finished.

In principle, I really do not recommend people to wait for translations of books on religion (by which I mean Islam) to be made in their own languages. The actual problems that are involved in the process of translation are much greater than people realize. Basically, if a person cannot find the things he needs to read in his own language, he should what people do in worldly matters. That is to say, he should take the trouble to learn a language in which they *can* be found. People commonly travel from one country to another either for studies or for employment, and to do this they learn other languages, and do not consider it as being "too difficult". Religion is not less important than these things.

As well as being vastly easier than people realize, this has in fact been standard practice in the Muslim world for the past 14 centuries. Apart from the Arabs (who were essentially a lapsed Mulsim people anyway) every

nation that has come into Islam has learned religion in the language of some older-established people. It is only after some centuries, when a sufficient number of trained and accredited scholars of sufficient stature are to be found among them that a literature may develop in their own language, if there is a need.

However, since people today generally regard what is difficult as easy, and what is easy as impossibly difficult, ascribe wisdom to youth and ignorance to age, and are very slow to revise their opinions, or to hold any different opinion to their friends, I will not press the subject, but leave it those who wish to do so to think about the question.

I hope that this translation will serve the purpose of demonstrating something of the kind of books on religion that are available in Urdu, and in other teaching languages of Islam. The best use that I think the reader could make of this translation is, after learning some basic Urdu, to use it as a crib for reading the original text, and then carry on and read Part Two in the original, plus as many other books as may be recommended to him by some reliable person.

It happened that I had made separate translations of two later chapters of the book. They deal with two issues that are very important: Tasawwuf and Islamism.

All kinds of mystification and confusion tends to get propagated in the name of Tasawwuf, and many people fall victim to various kinds of charlatans or to the kind of writer whose pen runs far in advance of his understanding of his subject. Ml Manzoor has written a very concise and informed common-sense introduction to the essential nature of Tasawwuf, and an understanding of the basic points he makes can save a person from many pitfalls.

At what might be seen as the opposite end of the spectrum, there are all kinds of groups who politicize religion to the point where they effectively degrade religion to the level of a political ideology. The word Islamism has been coined to describe this kind of approach. In the last chapter of Dīn and Sharī'at, the author answers a question about an extremist view that derives from this kind of thinking.

I feel that these chapters make very valuable reading in their own right, so I include them here.

Ihsân and Tasawwuf

The *Haqîqat* of *Ihsân* and *Tasawwuf*

A very important branch of Dîn, and one without which Dîn remains incomplete, is something which, in the Hadîth, is called *Ihsân*, and which we generally know as *Tasawwuf*.

The real meaning of this can be explained in ordinary terms in this way: that a person's heart attains the same level of certainty and assurance about Allâh Ta'âlâ that he gets from his direct experience (*mushâhidah*) of any reality, where there is no possibility of even the slightest doubt or misgiving about that thing.

Then, as a result of this, a relationship of worship and obedience is created to a degree where the heart becomes imbued in every breath with consciousness of Allâh Almighty, and with reverence and love for Him.

The spirit of such a person's worship, of his character, his social life, and all his dealings, in other words, of the whole of his life, then becomes this faith and inner conviction and relationship of obedience. Whatever he does, he does in response to this faith and to this relationship, and in accordance with its requirements. In this way his physical and visible life takes on the hue of these inner and invisible qualities.

"The hue (sibghah) of Allâh,
and what hue can be better than that of Allâh."

Once he knows the true meaning of *Ihsân* and *Tasawwuf*,
any person can see for himself that this is precisely the completion of religion and faith.

Thus, to whatever extent a person attains this fortune, to that extent his religion is complete; and to whatever degree a person falls short in this, to that extent his religion is incomplete.

In a well-known *hadīth* of the Rasûl of Allâh, known as the Hadīth of Jibrâ'īl, in a series of questions and answers, the Sahâbah *ridwân ullâhi alaihim ajma'īn* were in effect taught the whole of religion in summary.

Here, after *islâm* and *īmân*, *ihsân* is defined. So, apart from making clear what *ihsân* itself is, a clear indication is also given that the completion of *islâm* and *īmān* is only to be found in the condition of *ihsân*, and that this is the final component in the completion of religion.

What this *hadīth* says is that one day the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* was with some of the *Sahābah*, when Jibrâ'īl *alaihis salâm* came in the form of a young stranger. Coming close to the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu'alaihi wa sallam*, he sat down, and began to ask him questions. The first question he asked was, "What is *islâm*?" The Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* answered him.

He then asked, "What is *īmân*?" He answered that.

(These two questions in effect relate to the fundamental tenets and basic practices of religion.)

After this, the third question he asked was "What is *ihsân*?"

In answer to this, the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* answered, "That you worship and serve Allâh as though you see Him, for even if you cannot see Him, He can certainly see you."

In some reports, in place of "That you worship and serve Allâh," there is: "That you fear Allâh," and in others: "That you do things for the sake of Allâh."

[Note: in *hadîth* it is understood that the narrator is reporting the <u>sense</u> of what he heard, not necessarily the exact words. However, if many independent narrations give the same wording, it becomes likely that those are the exact words.(Translator)]

The meaning of this answer is that the condition of *ihsân* is that a servant worships and obeys Allâh Almighty, maintaining in everything that he does that same respect and consideration for Allâh as he would if he was able to see Him before his eyes.

Even if a servant is not able to see Allâh Almighty, still there is no doubt in the fact that Allâh is present and sees all, and sees His servant at all times. Therefore, at all times and in every action, a servant should observe the same degree of respect and consideration as he would if Allâh Almighty was before his eyes and he was able to see Him directly.

It is then clear that this condition will be created only when a person has developed the reality of *yaqîn* (full certainty) and when this has spread over his heart to such an extent that the be-ing of Allâh is in effect at all times before him.

This is the condition about which the Rasûl of Allâh*sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam* made this prayer,

" *Allâhummal* Make me fearful and reverent towards you as though I was seeing you at all times, right until I am brought to meet you."

<u>*Hudûr, yâd dâsht*, and *nisbat* are simply different terms for the condition of *Ihsân*.</u>

The *Sûfiyâ* use the terms *hudûr* and *yâd dâsht*, to refer to this condition of *ihsân*. The term *nisbat* means the same thing.

In their terminology, if a person is called *"sahib un nisbat"* this means that to some noteworthy degree he has reached this state.

If a person achieves this condition in full, then he reaches a state where, even if he wanted to, he is unable to become unconscious of Allâh, and remains so safe from doubts and misgivings, that even if he wanted to, he would be unable to bring them into his heart.

In one of his letters, Imâm Rabbânî, Mujaddid e Alf e Thânî *rahmatullâhi alaihi* describes what is presumably his own condition:

"A certain sincere *darwesh* from this august order (Naqshbandīyah), in accordance with the command, 'And speak about the favour of your Lord,' and referring to his own condition, says that *khawâtir* (misgivings) have disappeared from his heart to such an extent that even if he were to be given a life as long as that of Nûh *alaihis salâm*, (which was more than a thousand years), and consciously tried to cause some misgiving to come into his heart, even then it would not happen."

[Referring to the kind of people who because of their *mahrûmî*, *be nasībî*, and *'adm e nisbat*, deny this and call it a myth, at the end of the same letter Imâm e Rabbânî quotes a verse of Rûmî:

Whatever is read as a fable
Will be only a fable

The water
is the water of the Nile.
To the people of Egypt
it appears as blood.
While to the people of Moses
it is not blood.
It is simply water."]

Then the natural result of this *nûr ul yaqîn*, *hudûrî nisbat*, or condition of *ihsân*, is that, in comparison to a person's relationship with Allâh Almighty, all attachments to other things cease to exist. Then all his inner and outer actions, for example his friendship and enmity, his

meeting people and avoiding people, his taking and giving, start to be done purely for the sake of Allâh.

This is the condition of *ikhlâs*, about which the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam* has said,

> "Whoever loves
> only for the sake of Allâh, and hates
> only for the sake of Allâh, and gives
> only for the sake of Allâh, and refuses
> only for the sake of Allâh,
> he has perfected his faith."

The highest degree of this belongs to the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and because of this, the highest level of *'ilm*, (knowledge of religion) *ma'rifat*,(recognition of Allâh), *taqwâ* (scrupulousness) and *khashyat* (reverence) is also his. Thus on one occasion he said,

> "The most scrupulous (*atqâ*) of you,
> and the one
> who knows most about Allâh
> is myself."

[The point of saying this is to stop people trying to attain what they might think to be piety by going beyond the limits he has set by his example and teaching.]

Then, through the grace of the company of the Rasûl of Allâh *sallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and each in accordance with his capacity and his situation, the Sahâbah *radiyallâhu 'anhum* all acquired this fortune, and this is also the real capital of the *awliyâ* of Allâh in every generation. That is to say, this *nûr ul yaqîn* and the bond of obedience and condition of *khashyat* and *muhabbat* that comes from it, is the ultimate objective of all the *adhkâr*, *ashghâl*, and *mujâhidât* of *tasawwuf*.

The *'ālim rabbāni* and *muhaqqiq sūfi* of our century, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi *nawwarallāhu marqadahu* in one of his letters writes about this *nūr ul yaqīn*:

"This is the ultimate objective of all the Tariqahs. Why did the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* give up their whole lives and all their wealth and their positions in society? What was it that they saw? What it was is that, through the grace of the company of the Rasūl of Allāh *alaihis salām*, they had developed *yaqīn*. So now this became the centre-point of their every action. Why did *Sayyidi* Abd ul Qadir Jilānī and *Khwājah e Khwājagān* Mu'īn ud Dīn Chishtī and *Sayyid ut Tā'ifah* Bahā ud Dīn Bukhāri become great men? It was through this same *yaqīn* that they became great."

A few lines further on he says,

"This *nisbat* is called *ihsān*, and it was for this that the Rasūl of Allāh *sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam* was sent, and all the Sahābah took this up, each in accordance with his status. Later, the Awliyāa of the Ummah developed other ways of developing it." *(Makātib e Rashīdiyah p.81)*

Basically, in this matter the essential thing is the development of this *nūr ul yaqīn* and this *ihsāni nisbat*. As has been pointed out, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*, through being in the company of the Rasūl of Allāh *sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, by involving themselves in good works in accordance with his instructions, and by sacrificing their effort and their wealth in the path of Allāh, acquired this with full *aqīdat* and *muhabbat*. Then, after the Rasūl of Allāh *sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam* left this world, the senior Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* (who had developed this fortune to an outstanding degree) individually, and the whole *jamā'at* of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* collectively, became his successors in this.

So, together with *īmān* and *a'māl e sālihah*, and *aqīdat* and *muhabbat*, the company and friendship of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* was enough to enable a person to achieve this objective.

The origin of the *sufi tariqah* for creating *ihsani nisbat*

Later on, after the time of the Sahabah (radiyallahu 'anhum) had passed, times changed, the level of good in Muslims began to [illegible] and evil began to increase. Now [illegible] in that time the main successors and custodians of this [illegible] and who in this branch had more or less the same [illegible] of specialised understanding and proficiency as the mujtahid imams had in fiqh, saw that the direct influence of the company of the Rasul of Allah (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and his Sahabah (radiyallahu 'anhum) no longer remained, and also that in comparison to earlier times the level of good in Muslim society was lower and the level of evil was much greater. So as a means of creating this *nur* of *yaqin* and ihsani nisbat in the heart, they selected certain practices and activities which they considered to be useful and helpful in developing this condition, such as dhikr, *muraqabah*, *mujahadat*, *riyadat* and so on. These were things whose usefulness for this purpose was understandable in rational terms, and at the same time, for which very clear indications were to be found in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith.

Then, over and above this, the validity of the views of these elders has had the stamp of approval by the *jamhur* of the Ummah, and of practical experience of its effectiveness.

The Experience of More Than a Thousand Years, and the Consensus of the *Sulahaa* of the Ummah.

For a thousand years, in fact even more than that, the most *salih* class of the Ummah has been in agreement that the way of the *Sufiya* (called *Suluk* or *Tariqat*) for developing this *nur* of *yaqin* or *kaifiyat* / *nisbat ma'allah*, that is to say ihsani nisbat, is both valid in its foundations and effective in practice. Who can deny that the famous names of the Ummah, such as Khwajah Ma'ruf Karkhi, Bishr Hafi, Sari Saqti, Shaqiq Balkhi, Bayazid Bustami, Junaid Baghdadi, Abu Bakr Shibli, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Shaikh Shahab ud-Din Suhrawardi, Shaikh Ahmad Rifa'i, Shaikh Abul Hasan Shadhili, Khwajah Uthman Haruni, Khwajah Mu'in ud-Din Chishti, Khwajah Baha

ud Dîn Naqshband, and then, in the three centuries that have passed of our second millennium, Khwâjah Bâqî Billâh, Imâm Rabbânî Mujaddid e Alf e Thânî Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindî, and his Khalîfahs, and Shâh Waliyullâh Dehlawî, and Sayyid Ahmad Shahîd (*rahmatullâhi 'alaihim ajma'în*) and thousands like them?

Without any doubt, there have been thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands, of individuals who in their time have reached this *ihsânî mashar* and indeed led people on this path and called them to it, and through the company and training of each one of them, thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands of servants of Allâh have acquired this fortune.

Whoever knows anything at all about these *silsilahs* knows that whatever those *mashâikh* attained, they attained through this path. So, when this *tarîqah* has produced so many *kâmilîn* and *ash'hâb* of *ihsan* and *yaqîn*, who can categorically be called the flower of the Ummah, what doubt can there be of its validity, its effectiveness, and its acceptance?

Aberrations in Tasawwuf and their reform

Certainly, just as in other branches, that is to say, both in *aqâ'id* and in the practices of Dîn, there have, in some circles of the *ummah*, been both minor and major aberrations, so also the branch of *sulûk* and *tasawwuf* has not remained safe from error. However, just as Allâh Almighty has created *ulamâa e rabbâni* and *mujtahidîn* to correct errors in *aqâ'id* and practices, he has also continued to create *muhaqqiqîn* among the *sûfiyâa* to correct errors and deviations in the branch of *sulûk* and *tasawwuf*.

[Particularly in the last 3 to 4 centuries the work of reform and revival of tasawwuf that has taken place in Hindustân is a first-rate example of separating out the milk from the water. Here we have thick volumes of the letters of Imâm e Rabbânî Mujaddid e Alf e Thânî and his son and successor Khwâjah Muhammad Ma'sûm, then the writings and letters of Shâh Waliyullâh Dehlawî and Qâdî Thanâ'ullâh Pânîpatî,

and then the collected sayings and advice of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd put together by Shāh Ismā'īl Shahīd under the name *Ṣirāṭ-ul-Mustaqīm*.
Wa raḥmatullāhi 'alaihim ajma'īn.

Thereafter, in this century, we have the booklets and letters of Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *raḥmatullāhi 'alaihi*, and most recently of a whole library of writings on this subject by Ḥakīm-ul-Ummah Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānwī *raḥmatullāhi 'alaihi*.

These efforts have made *taṣawwuf* so clearly visible and so effectively cleared away all the deception and malicious propaganda that if anyone now goes astray on this path he really has no one to blame except himself!

So, just as it is not right for anyone, on the basis of the errors of some parties in *aqā'id* or practices, to simply get irritated and then cease to pay any attention to *aqīdah* and practice, so also it is not right for any person, because of the errors of some parties in the field of *taṣawwuf*, to cease to pay any attention to this branch of Dīn, without which a person's Dīn will remain incomplete, and without which he will not find the *ḥalāwat* (sweetness) of *īmān*.

* * *

From what has been said so far, the reader will have become aware of the position of *iḥsān* in Dīn, and what it really is, and that the highway for those who wish to reach this condition is the thing which we generally call *sulūk* or *taṣawwuf*.

<u>The need for a *murshid* (guide)</u>

After this it is necessary to know that all the *imāms* and experts in this field are unanimous that to follow this path it is necessary to have a guide. This is also the established practice of all the *silsilahs* of *sulūk*.

No one can just look into a book on medicine and start treating his own illnesses or those of others. If he does so, his treatment will be

both wrong and dangerous. In precisely the same way, for the treatment of the spirit, it is necessary to look for the help of a spiritual doctor, and to follow his instructions and prescriptions.
He must be a person who has himself followed this path and reached its objective, that is to say, has reached the condition of *ihsān* and contact with Allāh, and knows how to recognise the hot and cold of this path.

Therefore, the first step a seeker on this path should take is to find a compatible person who is *sāhib un-nisbat* and *sāhib ul-irshād* to be his guide, and ask him to treat him and guide him. This is called *irādat*.

Without any doubt, such servants of Allāh are daily becoming fewer and fewer, but *al-hamdu lillāh*, the world is not yet devoid of them, and in our own time there are still people about whom, within the limits of my own human limitations of knowledge and evaluation, I can fairly say are the heirs and trustees of this treasury of *nisbat*. Under their guidance those seekers whose motives are pure, and who make the necessary effort, *in shāa allāh*, will not fail to reach their objective.

Recognising the Men of God

This does not in any way mean that every person who represents himself to be a *pir* (spiritual father) is capable of guiding people along this path. Who does not know that these days, among *ālims*, *maulwis*, *hakims* and doctors, there are both qualified and unqualified, and both genuine and imitation? In the same way, among *pirs*, all kinds are to be found. Indeed the present situation is that the false vastly outnumber the genuine. However, just as it is possible in other fields to distinguish the genuine from the false, so too in the field of *tasawwuf*, to distinguish those who are capable from those who are not is not that difficult.

The *muhaqqiqin* of this path, who are also expert in the *ilm* of *sharī'ah* (such as, in recent times, Shāh Waliyullāh *rahmatullāhi 'alaihi* and Qādī Thanā'ullāh *rahmatullāhi 'alaihi*), from statements given in the *Kitāb* and *Sunnah*, and in the light of their own religious understanding

and tasawwuf and their own experience in this path, have set out signs of these true servants of Allah by which those who are worthy of being followed and capable of irshad can be recognised.
The most important sign of these true servants that most mashaikh have given us is that, together with taqwa and adherence to the sunnah, they have the quality that when in their presence a person becomes mindful of Allah, his love for the things of the world decreases, and his love for Allah and his concern for the akhirat increases, and that under their guidance these things are clearly felt by the people traveling this path.

So, the seeker should either himself search for some such servant, or if, through the advice of reliable and discerning persons, he has confidence in some such servant, and on coming into his presence this confidence increases, then he should make *ruju* to him, and ask for his guidance. Thereafter, he should be as strict in following his prescriptions and recommendations as a physically sick person is in following the prescriptions of his doctor. If this is done, then *in shaa allah* a person will not be disappointed, and Allah Almighty will certainly give him some degree of this *nur ul yaqin* and condition of *ihsan* through which Din and *Iman* become complete. *Iman bil ghaib* then becomes the same as *iman bish shuhud*, he becomes safe from every form of doubt or misgiving, and through this his whole life becomes a life of *ihsan*.

The basic subject-matter of *suluk* and *tasawwuf* and its actual goal is this *nur ul yaqin*, condition of *ihsan*, and relationship with Allah. However, since this is a felicity of the highest order, its price also has to be met. Only those seekers of truth will be able to attain it who make this their only objective, and who have the courage to sacrifice their ease and comfort and whatever else they have to achieve it, and so find it easy to devote their lives, and even to lose them, in this path. For this reason, in every age, the number of seekers on this path has always been few.

Islah ul āmm or ordinary reform

However, there is a degree below this. This is that a person takes care, and makes the effort that, together with making sure that his *aqā'id* are valid and firm, he develops to some degree a taste for and enthusiasm for *ibādat* and *dhikr* of Allāh, and begins to find some enjoyment in these things, then, at least to the basic level, his actions and character become reformed, he develops a dislike for bad actions and a desire to do good, and his habits develop in accordance with this.

[Following the manner of Shāh Waliyullāh *rahmatullāhi alaihi*, this can be called the ordinary and necessary level of *ihsān*, and the level of which ordinary Muslims, including those who are occupied in working to earn their living, should not remain devoid. In the terminology of some elders, this is also called *islāh ul ā'mm*, and we have taken this term from there.]

Al hamdu lillāh concern and enthusiasm for this to a very considerable extent is still to be found among religious-minded Muslims, and most of the people who come to the *mashā'ikh* of *irshād* in our times basically come with this objective.

As far as the *ihsāni nisbat* and *rābitah ma'allāh* which is described earlier, and which is the essential objective of the *silsilah* of *tasawwuf*, is concerned, this writer in no way has the competence or the right to say anything about it. Those who are looking for this should establish contact with a *sāhib ul nisbah*, and only start this journey under his guidance and supervision.

However, for those who are looking for the second level, there are some things I can put forward here which I have heard my elders telling people, and which are general guidelines to *dīn* and *sharī'ah*. This servant does not see any problem in putting these things before people. Indeed he has hope that, if any servant of Allāh practices on them, and gets some benefit from that, then, as much reward as the Most Merciful of the Merciful gives that servant for his action, in accordance with His principle "Whoever leads another to a good action, he will have the same reward as the person who does it." He

will also give to this unworthy servant." (This Hadith is in Sahih Muslim)

An initial program of practice for seekers at this level.

1) The first priority is valid and firm *imān* and *aqīdah*. If a person's *aqīdah* is corrupted, for example, if there is some element of *shirk* in it or some other such contamination, then every action he does is wasted. Then, even if for his whole life he keeps fast every day and spends the whole night in worship and *dhikr*, it will have no value at all in the sight of Allah. Therefore, the first thing that has to be done is to make sure that a person's *imān* and *aqīdah* is valid and firm.

What has been written at the beginning of this book on this matter is sufficient as a basic summary.

2) It is necessary to know the essential orders and *masā'il* of *Dīn* (whether they relate to things like prayer and fasting and other acts of worship which are obligatory on any person, or to a person's own everyday actions and interactions). If a person does not know these things, he must to make sure to find out and learn them in whatever way is appropriate and at the same time not too difficult in relation to his circumstances.

3) A person needs to repent sincerely for whatever deficiency there has been to date in his obeying the orders of Allāh, and for the part of his life that has been spent in disregard and disobedience, and make a firm decision and resolution that from now on he will observe His commandments and live a life of obedience.

[It should be kept in mind that the things that Allāh Almighty has ordered people to do are things that a person can do, and can do without getting into any difficulty. There is no order from Allah for a person to do things that are not in his power. In Dīn so much allowance has been made that, if a person is not able to make his prayer standing up, then he is permitted to make it sitting, and if this is too difficult, then even lying down. Similarly, because of sickness or

even because of travel, it is permitted to postpone the fasts of Ramaḍān to a later date. It is the same with all other commandments. Therefore, observance of religion is in no way difficult. Wherever it seems difficult, this is simply a matter of lack of resolution, and of not being in the habit. If a person resolves to do something, and then, by doing it for a while, creates that habit, then *in shāa Allāh* he will soon reach the point where he will not find rest except by observing the orders of religion.]

4] We are human and we have human weaknesses. The *shayṭān* and our own *nafs* are always with us. Thus it happens that a person make the intention to avoid sin and observe the commandments of Allāh, but as a result of the urgings of his *nafs* and *shayṭān* he commits some sin. Therefore we should make it our practice that, if we take a wrong step and fall into some sin, then, as soon as we become aware of this, or our attention is drawn to it, we should turn to Allāh and ask forgiveness and promise to avoid doing this again. After committing a sin, by being contrite and asking forgiveness, as well as a person's sins being forgiven and completely erased, he earns the pleasure and love of Allah Almighty.

"Indeed Allāh loves
those who repent."

If a sin also affects the rights of some other person, for example if a person has oppressed someone, or spoken ill of someone behind his back, or trespassed on someone's rights, or hurt some person's heart, then, as well as asking forgiveness from Allāh, it is also necessary to obtain the forgiveness of the person offended, and to give back to him whatever is his right. In this book, in the section on *Muʿāsharāt* and *Muʿāmalat*, a hadith was quoted saying that on the Day of Judgement some people will come with a whole fortune in the form of salat, fasting, charity, and so on. However, together with this, they have to answer for the rights of very many people: they have been vindictive towards some, they have slandered or dishonored others, they have insulted others, and so on and so on. As a result, all the reward for their acts of worship will be given to those they have

wronged, and, when that is not enough to cover what they owe, the sins of all those they have wronged will be loaded onto the heads of these devout confessors, and they will be pushed into Hell. Allah save us from that!

5) The importance of good character in religion and in the sight of Allah, and the degree to which this enters into making a person worthy of the mercy and the pleasure of Allah has been explained under the heading of 'Akhlaq'. Therefore any person looking for religion and the right path should be very concerned that his life should be graced with good character and cleansed of evil traits. However, since character is to a large degree related to a person's natural disposition and his inborn temperament, the process of character reform is more difficult than the reforming of actions. At the same time, if Allah Almighty makes it easy for a person, then it is not difficult.

One common tactic to achieve this is to take care and to force oneself to act according to the requirements of good character traits such as humility, gentleness, forbearance, mercy, affection, restraint and moderation, generosity and self-sacrifice, goodwill towards others, and so on. Together with this, a person should make a firm resolution to oppose the urgings of evil traits like arrogance, anger, avarice, greed, envy, malice, selfishness, and so on, and exercise the full force of his willpower in doing this. In sha'a Allah, within a short time, as a result of effort and practice, his character will adjust to the form of his actions.

It comes in hadith,

"Whoever tries to be chaste,
Allah will make him chaste,
and whoever tries
to be self-supporting,
Allah will give him wealth,
and whoever tries
to exercise self-restraint

Allâh will give him self-control."
(Bukhârî and Muslim).

A pointer in this direction is also to be found in one incident where a Sahâbî asked the Messenger of Allâh what he should do about the hardness of his heart. He advised him, "Stroke the head of the orphan." (The gesture of attention, concern, and affection will lead to the reality of these things.)

6] Care should be taken to perform all acts of Worship, particularly the salât, carefully and properly. Also a person should develop a habit of nafl 'ibâdat, and particularly of tahajjud salât. Acts of worship, be they bodily or monetary, or both, be they obligatory or voluntary, (provided they are not devoid of spirit) are a major means of spiritual development.

Some recommendations have been made in this book under the heading of *'Ibâdat* for the proper fulfilment of salât, fasting, sadaqah, and so on, and for making them live and effective. Practicing on these will, *in shâa allâh*, be of benefit in this matter.

7] A daily practice of *tilâwat* of Qur'ân and *dhikrullâh* should be established - for example to recite, morning and evening, one *tasbîh* (i.e.100 times each) of *kalimah tamjîd*, '*subhânallâh wa'l hamdu lillâh wa lâ ilâha illa'llahu wa'llâhu akbar*,' one tasbîh of *istighfar*, and one *tasbîh* of *durûd sharîf*, and to do this on consistently every day.

These *kalimahs* should be read with attention to their meaning, with concentration, and with enjoyment, and also with the intention that, apart from reward and the pleasure of Allâh, through their *barkat*, the *nûrâniyat* of the name of Allâh, and love for Him, should come into the heart.

As well as this, as far as possible, a practice should be made of reciting *tasbîh fâtimah* after every salât. *Tasbîh fâtimah* is 33 times "*subhânallâh*," 33 times "*al hamdu lillâh*," and 34 times "*allâhu akbar*."

To recite this does not even take two minutes. What is needed is constancy.

Also, at the time of going to sleep at night, after getting into bed, this same *tasbīh fātimah* should be read, plus three times *istighfār* (*astaghfiru llāha llaḍhī lā ilāha illā huwa l-hayyu l-qayyūmu wa atūbu ilaih*).

For *tilāwat* of Qur'ān some appropriate time should be set aside. Whatever amount is read, even if it be very little (for example one or two *rukū's*), should be read with regularity, with attention to correctness, and with proper manners and reverence.

A habit should also be created of frequently bringing the name of Allāh onto the tongue in one way or another, for example *yā allāh*, or *lā ilāha illā llāh*, or *kalimah tayyibah* or *kalimah shahādah* or *istighfār* or some other such *kalimah*.

After a few days of conscious practice, *in shāa allāh* this will become a habit. This is also one way of being counted among those referred to in the *āyat*:

> **"Men whom trading or buying**
> **does not distract**
> **from consciousness of Allāh."**

8. At night, after *'Ishā salāt*, or at some quiet time during the day, a time should be set aside for disengaging one's thoughts from everything else, and for (four or five minutes) contemplating one's own death: "When death comes (which is an absolute certainty), what is going happen to me then? After that, when I am wrapped in a *kafn*, my *Janāzah Salāt* is made, and I am put into my grave, what will be my situation in that house of solitude? Then, if I am not fit for the mercy and forgiveness of Allāh, what will I have to undergo during the long ages from then to *Qiyāmah*? Then, on the Day of *Qiyāmah*, when I am brought before Allāh, and the record of my actions is put before me, and everything is added up, then what will my position be?" By thinking about death and the stages after it, a person should try to

imagine each stage actually happening to himself.) Then, he should earnestly entreat Allāh to forgive his sins, and pray that he may die with *īmān*, and also for mercy and generosity in the grave and the stages beyond. For this contemplation four or five minutes is enough. What is needed is constancy.

9) Whatever *dhikr*, *'ibādat*, or other good action a person does, should be done with confidence in the heart of its reward, with the purpose of pleasing of Allāh, and also with conscious intention and awareness of this. In the terminology of Dīn, this is called *īmān* and *ihtisāb*. Two rak'ats of salāt made with *īmān* and *ihtisāb* is worth more than two hundred rak'ats made without this. Intention and *īmān* and *ihtisāb* is the elixer which turns eating, walking, laughing with one's wife and children, in short, every legitimate action of life into *'ibādat*, that is to say into an action deserving reward.

10) Praying for one's religious and legitimate own worldly needs, apart from being a means and an aid towards these things, is also an *'ibādat* in its own right. Indeed, the Rasūl of Allāh has said in one place that du'ā is "the core or essence of 'ibādat." (Tirmidhī) In another hadīth it comes, "When the door of du'a is opened for a servant, the doors of mercy are open for him." (Tirmidhī)

Therefore the person who is seeking for God should know that du'ā is the *khāss wasilah* for the pleasure and mercy of Allāh and nearness to Him, and should pray a lot, particularly after salāt. Then at other suitable times also he should regularly and earnestly pray. Among the most special gifts that the Rasūl of Allāh was given by Allāh were the eloquent words of the prayers he was given. Hundreds of his prayers have been preserved in the books of hadīth. There is a great *nūrāniyat* and *barkat* in them. Some servants of the Lord have also put together compendiums of these prayers. Among these, Mullā 'Alī Qārī's *Al Hizb ul A'dham* and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī's *Munājāt Maqbūl* have been published with Urdu translations, and are easily available. Both are divided in seven sections corresponding to the seven days of the week. If possible, one section from either one of them should be read daily.

At the end of his book *Islam kya hai?* (What is Islam?) this weak transcriber has assembled some duas selected from Quran and Hadith which are short and at the same time so comprehensive that they cover every need in this world and the next. Together with their translation they can be read in only five minutes. If Allah Almighty gives the taufiq, at least these should be made into a daily routine.

* * *

If he practices on them, then *in shaa allah* these ten things should be enough for a person seeking to correct his life.

However, most people's nature is such that simply reading things in a book is not enough. Without the influence and the company of some living book, they do not reach the point of actually putting these things into practice.

Participation in and Working for a non-Muslim Government

A Question and Reply

(When this book 'Dīn o Sharī'at was published in 1958, someone sent a question relating to one important issue in it: "The Question of Muslims Living under a non-Muslim Government". This question was serious and reasonable. For this reason the writer felt it important to answer it, and a reply was sent. Because of the importance of the subject it was appropriate that this answer should also be incorporated in the book itself, but to date it has not been possible to do this. However, at that time it was printed in one edition of *al Furqān*, so it has been preserved. Now that a new edition of this book has been presented to this nobody for revision, and is being published with a few additions, this article can also added as an appendix.)

Question:

In your book Dīn o Sharī'at, in the section on Politics and Government, you have set out some basic principles and guidelines for Muslims living under non-Muslim governments, according to which they can legitimately accept employment in many branches of government and can also participate in legislative bodies. I accept these with full heart and mind. What you say strikes me intuitively as right, and also appears to be correct in terms of Sharī'ah. The argument you have given in support of this, even though very brief, is to my mind convincing enough.

However one point still disturbs me. This is that you have in no way countered the arguments and the outlook on the basis of which a certain well-known religious organisation in India and Pakistan regards participation in any non-Muslim Government or its legislative bodies as being under all circumstances an act of rebellion, and

classifies government service under such governments as 'assisting in sin and transgression' and service of rebels.

The well-known argument that these parties put forward is the āyat in Sūrah Tawbah:

"They take their scholars
and their monks
as lords before Allāh."

And the hadith explaining this āyat which is reported by Adiy bin Hātim. You will certainly be aware of the detail of this. It would be very good if you could enlarge on this point and remove this apprehension from the minds of people such as myself.

Reply:

With reference to the argument in Din o Shariat to which you refer, what actually happened was that when I first wrote it, after setting out my own position, I also set out a refutation of this opposing view and the well-known arguments used in support of it. Then it occurred to me that my approach throughout the book was simply to try to put forward and explain what I regarded as being the correct position in each aspect of Religion, and to put forward as much in the way of argument as was necessary to make the point clear to the reader and set his mind at rest. At no point had I set out to refute opposing arguments. So it seemed to me that I should stick to this approach in this matter as well. Therefore I removed this section, which was already written, from the text. However this section remained in my keeping together with the original manuscript. Therefore, with some slight adjustments to the wording, I am copying it out for you. *In sha Allah*, it should be enough to satisfy reasonable people such as yourself.

First I wrote a few lines setting out this opposing view, to which you refer. After this I wrote:

"From the Scripture and the Sunnah, and from the uninterrupted confirmation of the Ummah, what I have understood in relation to this

is that for every Muslim it is necessary, and in effect a condition of faith, that he understand Islâm, the teachings of Islâm, that is to say the individual and social code of life brought by Nabi Muhammad *sallallâhu alaihi wa sallam*, to be the truth and the right way, and to regard anything other than that as wrong and invalid. It should therefore be his heartfelt desire that all mankind should come to have faith in Allâh and his Messenger, and accept his holy Religion of Islâm, and that the whole world should come into its fold and under its government.

And that the whole of Religion should be for Allâh.

Indeed it is also obligatory for all Muslims that at any time, whatever they can do, directly or indirectly, by way of effort or planning towards this purpose, they should not fall short in that. This has also been set out in detail in the chapter on "Working for and supporting Religion." But these people's statement that that it is not permissible for any Muslim to work together with a non-Muslim government in any field of activity, and that government service under it is not permissible for any Muslim, and their putting this forward as a *fatwâ*, is to my mind something for which there is no proof or basis in Sharî'ah. Apart from this, under some circumstances this long-distance *"fatwâ"* can cause serious harm to the religious objectives and welfare of Muslims.

(The pronouncement in question was made from behind the Pakistan border, and was supposed to be applicable to Muslims living in India. The author of this article lived in India. Trans.)

To my mind, the general Shar'î position on this question is that just as a Muslim can help, work with, or work for a person who is not virtuous, or who is not Muslim, in activities which are not sinful and not transgression, so also we can help and work with a non-Muslim government or other organisation in activities that are not against Sharî'ah, and do not come under sin and transgression, and which do not cause any harm to Islâm and to Muslims. For example the government departments concerned with sanitation, food supply, health, communications, agriculture, industry, crime prevention, and

maintaining the peace, and many other departments as well, are not engaged in sin and transgression. In some of them, service to humanity and public welfare are predominant. Thus there is no reason for there to be a legal prohibition on helping such organisations or accepting employment within them.

This *fatwa* of impermissibility is based on a serious error of principle. It is put forward that every non-Muslim government is a parallel religion opposed to the Holy Religion given by Allâh Almighty, and a rebel system set up in opposition to the rightful system which Almighty Allâh has sent down. For this reason, to take part in any of its work, or to be employed in any of its branches is to serve a false religion and to help it in opposing the true religion.

But, if Allâh Almighty has given a person any knowledge and understanding of Religion at all, then with a little bit of thought it will becomes evident to him that this whole argument is oratory and hyperbole, not legal argument. In reality, the secular governments that are being referred to are (despite the present-day breadth of their powers and their reach) simply organisations set up to run the general administration of a country, whose members keep changing, whose parties keep changing, and whose principles and laws even keep changing. They make mistakes and their mistakes are subject to criticism. Especially in democratic countries, these criticisms are at times extremely severe and extremely humiliating.

Then, at times court cases are even brought against high-ranking people in these governments, and sentences are also passed on them. It is also accepted that the public has a right to change these governments, and on this basis in different countries these governments are changed overnight. Also, because these governments are simply organisations to administer the affairs of a country, at times people of different creeds and ideologies, different religions and sects, and even people of different political views, form coalitions where the only point of agreement is a program for the administration of the country.

So, if the real position of a government is like this, then certainly because it is not in accordance with Islâm or with Sharî'ah, it will in terms of Sharî'ah, be classified as a wrongful and improper government. But to say that every such a government is a parallel religion, opposed to the Religion of Allâh, and that the people running it are setting themselves up as gods before Allâh, could only be considered valid if the Religion of Allâh is brought down to a very low level. That is to say if Allâh Almighty is regarded in the same category as a worldly governor and Religion as a kind of state or system of government.

Almighty Allâh
is above anything like that:
far, far, above.

Similarly another error in this connection is that, having categorised the secular legislation of these governments as being in opposition to the Religious Lawgiving of Allâh, they claim that this is "*shirk*" (worship of someone or something other than God) and even "claiming divinity". On this basis they categorise participation in their legal assemblies as an implicit claim to divinity, and as therefore absolutely prohibited. In point of fact, what actually constitutes *shirk* is to accept the right of someone other then Allâh to make religious law - that is to say to regard any created thing (be it a person or party or organisation) as Holy, having the right to be obeyed, and infallible, and therefore to regard them as having the right to make things harâm or halâl, to order and to prohibit, and to regard obedience to their laws as virtue and good fortune, and disobedience to them as sin and misfortune.

This was the deviation of the group among the Nasârâ (Christians) who are referred to in this verse of the Holy Qur'ân:

They take their scholars
and their hermits
as lords instead of Allâh

They accorded their scholars and hermits this degree of sanctity and right to pass laws. This is also clear from the Hadith of Adiy bin Hâtim

which explains this verse. Then from studying the history of Christianity this point becomes even clearer.

(It comes in Tirmidhi and elsewhere from 'Adi ibn Hatim *radiyallahu anhu* that he was originally a Christian. When he heard the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam* recite this verse from Surah Tawbah he put to him that the Christians did not actually regard their scholars and hermits as gods. The Messenger of Allah *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam* answered, "Is it not so that whatever these scholars and hermits ruled as being permitted or prohibited, these Christians accepted that this ruling made those thing permitted or prohibited, and obeyed accordingly? This is their taking them as Lords." It is clear from this hadith that the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam* was referring to this kind of ruling, and the point becomes even more clear from studying the history of Christianity, i.e. the doctrine of papal infallibility, Church councils promulgating matters of fundamental doctrine, acceptance of these rulings being defined as a religious duty and a point of faith, and so on. - translator.)

It is quite obvious that no one at all regards the legislation of modern non-Muslim governments that we are talking about as having this kind of status. Therefore to regard their legislation as Lawgiving in the sense in which only Allah has the right, and then to call this 'claiming divinity' or '*shirk*' or criminal, is complete and utter hyperbole and poetic exaggeration. Then to put forward this verse of Surah Tawbah in support of this is even more out of place and presumptuous!

I hope that these lines will be sufficient to clear your apprehensions, and those of others like yourself, on this subject.

The basic point is that from the point of view of Islam, only those governments can be regarded as valid and legitimate which are established on the basis of the principles and rules of Islam relating to government and politics, and in which the Scripture and the Sunnah and the Shari'ah of Islam is fixed as the basis of law and regulation. However where governments are not like this (whether they are run

by non-Muslims or Muslims or both together), despite their being invalid and illegitimate. Islam accepts their existence in the same way as it accepts the existence of unvirtuous or non-Muslim individuals. Then, depending on their individual conditions, it divides them into different categories, and gives different rulings for each.

Then, just as under ordinary circumstances it does not prohibit assistance or working together with non-Muslims in activities that do not constitute sin and transgression, it also does not prohibit assistance and working together with non-Muslim governments. On the contrary, if any non-Muslim individual or non-Muslim government undertakes any work which is of benefit to the creation of Allāh, then Islam encourages its followers to take part in it. The commandment to help in decency and good works is not limited to Muslims. Non-Muslims are also included in its broad meaning.

(In this connection those people who follow Abul A'lā Maudoodi, who is the leader of the organisation that propagates this viewpoint, should make a point of looking up what he has written in relation to the verse in Sūrah Mā'idah:

> ***Help each other in virtue***
> ***and fear of God***
> ***and do not help each other***
> ***In sin and transgression.)***

(This was written in 1995. The books of Abul A'lā Maudoodi are published by the organisation he founded, the Jamā'at Islāmī, and are subject to periodic revision by them. So what was in one edition will not necessarily be found in the next.)

Apart from this, it is often, indeed usually, necessary for Muslim citizens of a non-Muslim country to take some part in the work and in the legislative assemblies of non-Muslim governments, so as to protect Muslims from religious and material harm, and in general to look after their religious and secular interests.

So, under such circumstances, it is necessary for those Muslims who are fit and competent to do this, to take part in the work of the government. Similarly, if the religious and secular interests of the Muslims require avoidance of contact or participation, and their scholars and people of understanding decide on this policy, then it is necessary for the Muslims to act accordingly and adopt this policy. But even here, the basis of this decision will not be that "participation in and helping a non-Muslim government is in contradiction to faith in Allāh and refusal to follow false gods, and therefore absolutely prohibited", but will be a matter of the particular conditions of that time and the particular orders that apply to them. And Allāh Almighty knows best.

O Lord, do not leave our hearts
to go astray
after you have guided us,
and grant us your mercy.
It is you who are the Giver of all Gifts

Muhammad Manzūr Nu'mānī *'afā-Allāhu 'anhu*

Glossary

Imān and Aqā'id; The Existence of Allâh

'aml	action, work
'aqīdah	tenet
a'māl	plural of *'aml*
ādāb	good manners, decorum, proper procedure
akhlāq	character
da'wat	calling, invitation
dīn	religion, moral values
ḥukūmat	government
i'tiqād	faith, creed, doctrine
ibâdat	service, worship
ibâdât	acts of worship
mu'āmalāt	dealings, transactions
mu'āsharāt	social relations
nuṣrat	help
Qur'ān	often misspelled as Koran or Coran
raḍiyallāhu 'anhum	Allâh be pleased with them
rasūl	Messenger; a *nabī* to whom a new scripture has been given
ṣallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallam	Allâh send Mercy on him and Peace
sharī'at	the Path of the Law
siyâsat	politics

Tawhīd

'aḍhīm	huge, immense.
'alaihim us salām	The Peace (of God) be on them
Abū Dā'ūd	The compiler of an important book of Hadīth.
ahlullāh	People of Allâh; i.e. those who are close to Allâh by virtue of their piety
anbiyāa	Prophets; (pl. of *nabī*)
āyat ul kursī	Name of a verse in the Holy Qur'ân
ḍhulm	oppression, a wrong, wrongdoing
ḥadīth	report of anything said by, done by, or approved by the Messenger of Allâh.
ḥakīm	Practitioner of *Yūnānī* (Ionic) Medicine

halāl	permitted
harām	absolutely prohibited
Ihyāa ul 'ulūm	title of a famous book by Imām Ghazzālī
imām	leader, esp. a leading authority in religious learning
in shāa allāh	if Allāh wills
janāzah	funeral
kalimah	word, phrase, sentence
	the declaration *Lā ilāha illallāh muhammadur rasūlullāh* (There is no God but Allāh and Muhammad is His Messenger)
Kanz ul 'ummāl	title of a book of *hadīth*
lā ilāha illallāh	(there) is no god except for God (Himself)
masjid	Mosque
Mu'attā Imām Mālik	
	A compilation of *hadīth* by Imām Mālik
mushrik	a person who commits *shirk*
mushrikānah	adjective from *mushrik*
nabī	prophet
nasārā	followers (i.e. helpers) of Jesus, Christians
rukū'	bowing in prayer
sahābī	a Companion of the Messenger of Allāh
sajdah	placing the forehead on the ground in prayer
salāt	the formal prayer
shaytān	Satan; not a name but an epithet from a word meaning burning or scorching
shirk	ascribing divinity or its Attributes to anyone other than Allāh Almighty
sūrah	Chapter of the Holy Qur'ān

Names of *Sūrahs* from which Quotations are Taken

sūrah 'ankabūt	The Spider
sūrah āl 'imrān	The Household of Imrān
sūrah banī isrā'īl	The Children of Israel
sūrah fātihah	The Opening Chapter
sūrah fātir	The Creator
sūrah furqān	The Proof
sūrah ikhlās	Purity of Faith
sūrah luqmān	Luqmān
sūrah mumtahanah	Those to be Tested
sūrah nūh	Noah
sūrah shūrā	Consultation

sūrah yā sīn	Yā Sīn
sūrah yūnus	Yūnus

...

ta'ziyahs	lit. condolences; paper and bamboo constructions carried in procession by Shi'ians to commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn bin Ali at Karbala
Talbiyah	the prayer recited during the Hajj which begins "*labbaika Allahumma labbaika* ... ..."
tawāf	walking around the Ka'bah during the Pilgrimage to Makkah.
tawhīd	Oneness, recognising as One

The Hereafter

'adhāb	punishment
ākhirat	hereafter
fadl	generosity
fir'awn	Pharaoh
ghadab	wrath, anger
jahanam	Hell
jalāl	glory, splendour
jamāl	beauty, amiability
jannat	Gardens of Paradise
karam	kindness
Nimrūd	Nimrod
qahr	power to subjugate
sūrah qalam	The Pen
thawāb	Reward, recompense

Prophethood

'ajam	non-Arab, lit. inarticulate (by Arab standards, this only becomes comprehensible if you get to understand Arabic)
'ālim	person with learning esp. religious learning
'aql-e salīm	healthy mind, sound intellect
a'immah	pl. of *imām*
al-hamdu lillāh	All praise to Allah
amīr al-mu'minīn	Leader of the Faithful
arba'ah	four
asl	basic, essential, root

athar — lit. trace, track; report of the words or actions of the Messenger of Allah or his Companions
ayat — sign; anything that has meaning; verse of the Holy Qur'an

basharat — good news
Bayazid Bustami — A famous saint

Dajjal — The Arch-Deceiver or Anti-Christ
dhahir ul-kitab — the plain meaning of the scripture, in the light of explanations in the *Hadith* and the statements of the *Sahabah*, as opposed to supposed secret or hidden symbolic meanings
Daruriyat — things that are necessary

fadilat — excellence
faqahat — understanding of law
fikr — thought, concern
fiqh — jurisprudence, law
firqah — faction
fitnah — test, trial, temptation
furu' — branches

hadarat — term of respect, sort of equivalent to 'gentlemen'
hakimiyat — rulership
hamaqat — stupidity, foolishness
haqiqat — reality, truth
haqq — truth, the right
hijrah — migration, emigration for the sake of religion; the migration of the Messenger of Allah from Makkah to Madinah
hijri — date from the year of the *hijrah*, which is the year 1 of the Islamic calendar
hikmat — wisdom, discretion
hisn ul-hasin — *The Secure Fortress*
ihtiyat — care, caution
ijma' — consensus
ijtihad — exercise of independent judgement in law
irtidad — apostasy
istidraj — luring into destruction; giving rise to apparent miracle at the hand of a deceiver
ittiba' — following

jabariyah	determinism, the opposite extreme to *qadariyah*
jabr	predetermination, predestination
jahamiyah	a school which held that Allāh has a physical body
jamā'at	group, congregation
jumhūr	united body
kabīrah	major sin
kāfī	sufficient
kāfir	a person who wilfully denies or refuses to see something, unbeliever
karāmat	miracle occurring at the hand of a saint
kasbī	acquired, earned
khafjān	misgiving
khawārij	a sect who, among other things, maintain that a person who commits a major sin ceases to be a Muslim. The *khawārij* call themselves Muslim, but are not accepted as Muslim by any of the scholars of mainstream Islām
khilāfat	succession
kirām	noble
kitāb and Sunnah	the scripture and the teaching of the Messenger
kitāb	book, scripture
kufr	wilful denial of or refusal to see something; infidelity, unbelief
lā makān	without location
la'nat	curse, malediction
lawḥ e maḥfūẓh	the Preserved Tablet, on which everything that has happened in the future is written from the beginning of time.
ma'ādh allāh	Allāh preserve us
ma'qūliyat	reasonableness
ma'ṣūm	free of sin or error in religion
madhhab	school of thought
maḥādhat	being opposite each other
majbūr e maḥḍ	absolutely predetermined
mālikīyat	being owner
manshā'	origin, intention
maqbūliyat	being accepted
maqṣad	purpose, destination

murji'ah	school of philosophy which held, in opposition to orthodox doctrine, that a person who has faith will not be punished in the hereafter for his sins
mas'alah	question, issue
masāliḥ	factors to be taken into consideration
maslak	path, view
maṭlab	meaning
Maulānā	title used for religious scholars, meaning a person to whom we turn for instruction
[illegible]	[illegible]
mizāj	attitude, outlook, temperament
mu'jizah, mu'jizāt	miracle, miracles at the hand of a Prophet
mu'tazilah	a school of philosophy which maintained, among other things, that the Holy Qur'ān is a created thing, as opposed to orthodox doctrine which categorises it as the Word of Allah, and therefore one of His Attributes.
Muḥaddithīn	compilers and other specialised scholars of the *Ḥadīth*
mujtahid	person who exercises *ijtihād*
mukhtār muṭlaq	having absolute freedom to decide
mulḥaq	attached to
Munājāt Maqbūl	Name of a compilation of prayers
muqaddar	planned, allowed for
mutakallimīn	spokesmen; those religious scholars who specialise in answering the objections and arguments of philosophers in their own terms
muṭma'in	assured, having one's mind at rest
muttafiqah	unanimous
[illegible]	relying on
Nabūwat	Prophethood
	name of a compilation of prayers
nūr-e yaqīn	light of conviction
nuṣūṣ	the basic texts from which the law is derived
qaḍā	what is ordained
qadariyah	the school of philosophy that maintains that nothing is in any way predetermined, and that what will happen is simply the outcome of the decisions of each individual in the universe; the opposite extreme to *jabariyah*
qaḍī	judge
qawl	[illegible]
qawm	people

qīla wa qāla	more or less: this was said and he said. ... controversy altercation.
Qiyāmat	the Resurrection; also the period of time leading up to the end of the world, starting with the passing away of the Messenger of Allāh, but referring especially to the later part of that time.
raḥmat	mercy
risālat	Prophethood
riwāyat	narration
ru'yat	seeing, vision
rubūbiyat	the Attribute of Allāh of seeing to the welfare and upbringing of all His creatures.
rujḥān	preferred opinion
rujḥānāt	pl. of *rujḥān*
ṣāf	clean, plain, clear
Ṣaḥābah	Companion of the Messenger of Allāh
ṣāḥib e irādah	someone who has free will
ṣaḥīḥ	valid
salaf	predecessors
ṣāliḥīn	good people
sanad	chain of transmission back to original source
sayyidunā	our leader, mentor, ruler, etc
shāfī	healing, effective
shī'ah	a variety of sects originating from the party which assassinated the third Khalīfah, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān. Apart from one group, the Zaydiyah, they all hold doctrines that are contradictory to the fundamental tenets of Islam, and cannot be regarded as having the same religion as mainstream Muslims any more than Christians can be regarded as having the same religion as Jews. Ordinary Shī'ahs are not necessarily aware of the doctrines held by their scholars.
shub'hah	doubt, confusion
silsilah	chain
sunnah	lit. practice or custom; in law: anything said, done, or approved by the Messenger of Allāh

Sūrahs of the Holy Qur'ān:

sūrah aḥzāb	The Parties

sūrah kahf	The Cave
sūrah nahl	The Honeybee
sūrah najm	The Stars
sūrah nisāa	Women
sūrah yūsuf	Joseph
tilāwat	recitation
ta'alluq	relationship
tafsīr	commentary, explanation
taqdīr	the planning of Allāh
taqlīd	following an individual or school, usually used to mean following an established school of thought or school of law
taqwā	piety, scrupulousness, caution, watchfulness
tarz	way, manner, mode
taṣawwuf	Sufism
tashrī'	legislation
taswīl	enticement, talking someone into something evil or harmful
tawātur	agreement of independent lines of transmission on the same text – *tawātur* proves authenticity because it is not possible that several sources would independently make the same mistake
Ummah	body of followers
ummahāt ul 'aqā'id	the fundamental tenets
uṣūl	principles
wabā	plague, pestilence
wahbī	given as opposed to acquired
wahī	revelation
wājib ul ṭā'at	has to be obeyed
walī, awliyāa	friend; esp. friend of Allāh, saint
warā' ul warā'	Behind what is behind
wilāyat	sainthood

* * *

About This Book:

This is a translation of Book One of a very widely read Urdu book **Dîn o Sharî'at**. It is intended as a very general introduction to what Islam teaches, based on a series of lectures given by the author to university students in Lucknow.

The book is divided into two parts Creed or *Imâniyât*, and Practice or *A'mâli Shari'ât*. This volume covers the first part, and outlines the basic tenets of Islam and the basis on which they and the whole of the Shar'îat are founded. It also answers a number of the objections that have been raised in recent times by different groups and which create confusion in the minds of many Muslims today.

The Author:

The late Maulânâ Manzoor Nomânî *rahimahullâh* is a very well known scholar of Hadîth in the Indian sub-continent. He has been particularly active in the field of explaining the teachings and approach of the established religious schools to the general public, and particularly to the secular-educated public. His books are very widely read, and his work is greatly respected by both religious scholars and educated lay readers. He was a very active teacher and lecturer, and has written many books, booklets, and magazine articles. Some of his best-known works are *Ma'ârif-ul-Hadîth* (a very lucid and comprehensive 4-volume introduction to the Hadîth for the general reader) *Islâm Kyâ He?* (A very short introduction to the basic teachings of Islam for the ordinary adult reader) and *Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution* (A well-researched exposition of the origin and the open and hidden doctrines of the Itha 'Asharah Shi'ahs) He also established a journal **Al Furqân**, now under the editorship of his son Maulânâ Khalîl ur Rahmân Sajjâd Nomanî, who is a well known and highly respected scholar in his own right.

Zam Zam Publishers
Shahzeb Centre, Gawali Line # 3 Near Muqaddas Masjid,
Urdu Bazar Karachi, Pakistan.
Tel 0092-21-7760374,0092-21-7761671
Fax 0092-21-7725673
E-mail: zamzam01@cyber.net.pk
: zamzam@sat.net.pk